

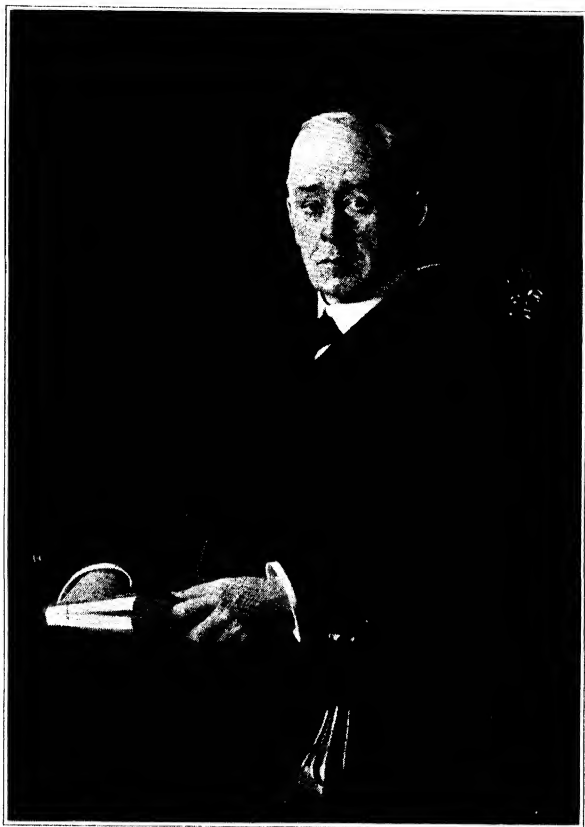


PRESENTED
BY THE
BOOK
COMMITTEE
OF THE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
OF FRIENDS OF
PHILADELPHIA
AND VICINITY

302 ARCH ST



1800



ISAAC SHARPLESS.

QUAKER BIOGRAPHIES

SERIES II

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES CONCERNING CERTAIN
MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. V.

FOR SALE AT FRIENDS' BOOK STORE
804 ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1920

ISSUED UNDER THE OVERSIGHT OF THE "BOOK
COMMITTEE" OF PHILADELPHIA YEARLY
MEETING OF FRIENDS.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ISAAC SHARPLESS, <i>by Edward W. Evans</i> ,	1
PLINY EARLE CHASE, <i>by Maria Chase Scattergood</i> ,	199
NEREUS MENDENHALL, <i>by Mary Mendenhall Hobbs</i> ,	245

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
Isaac Sharpless,	Frontispiece
The Sharpless Homestead,	6
The Farm Buildings,	13
The School-house at Birmingham,	16
Westtown School in 1860,	23
Four Westtown Teachers, 1871,	31
Isaac Sharpless, 1875,	34
Isaac Sharpless and Lydia Cope Sharpless, 1876,	36
Three Generations,	51
The President's Office,	87
A Day off,	130
Founders' Hall, Haverford,	147
The Sharpless Home at Haverford,	172
Haverford Meeting-house,	189
Pliny Earle Chase,	199
The Chase Home in Worcester,	205
Two Heads better than one,	215
The Chase Home at Haverford,	224
A Family Group,	231
Chase Hall,	240
Nereus Mendenhall,	245
Orianna Mendenhall,	267
The Home at Jamestown, N. C.,	278
The New Garden Meeting-house,	290
Alumni Hall, Haverford,	303

ISAAC SHARPLESS

EDUCATOR—HISTORIAN—CITIZEN—
QUAKER

1848-1920

*"All the beneficent forces of nature are quiet forces * * *.*

"As applied to institutions this lesson is that silent and steady work is most useful. What America is supposed to stand for, hustle and noise, has sometimes a temporary advantage but brings so many drawbacks in its train that the algebraic sum of its results has not always a positive sign. The man who quietly builds for the future is the greatest benefactor.

*"One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee;
One lesson, which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity:
Of toil unsevered from tranquility;
Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.'"*¹

ISAAC SHARPLESS, 1909.

ISAAC SHARPLESS

An Englishman, a man of standing and experience, on a visit to America was speaking of his voyage. He had sat at the same table with X——, a prominent American, a member of the Cabinet. "I did not think so much of X——," he said, in substance, "but there was an interesting, old fellow who sat at the table with us. I believe he was the president of a small college not far from Philadelphia. I thought he was more of a person than X——."

The president of the small college who made so favorable an impression upon this stranger was no longer a young man. In the spring of 1912 Isaac Sharpless completed his twenty-fifth year as president of Haverford College. When the alumni celebrated the event in the following winter President Wilson wrote his congratulations. "I want to express," he said, "my own personal admiration for him and to congratulate the College that these twenty-five years have been distinguished by the leadership of a man of such character and attainments." On the same

occasion ex-President Roosevelt wrote: "My own knowledge of President Sharpless's work has been largely through his writings on Pennsylvania Colonial History, in which he has made himself the foremost authority. But I know also that it is largely through President Sharpless's efforts that Haverford College has attained the high place it now holds among educators. He has not only elevated the educational standards of the College, but has by sheer force of character and conviction, markedly influenced the students under him and has been a force for good citizenship in the whole community, because of the interest he has taken in all public questions and because of his independence and keen sense of public obligation."

About two years later, in 1915, Isaac Sharpless received from President Lowell of Harvard University the degree of LL.D. with the words that he had "put aside the lure of expansion and made the college eminent for sound learning, scholarship and character." His own scholarly work as an historian had brought him positions of distinction in that field, and near the close of his life he received appointment as a member of the Commission on the Revision of the State Constitution. Within his own Society of Friends he had become an outstanding figure. The memo-

rial of his Monthly Meeting upon his death closed with the statement that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had lost "its most representative leader."

These scattered incidents of his later years suggest Isaac Sharpless in the ripeness of his maturity. As educator, as historian, as a member of his religious society and of his community, his achievements had been those "of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows far noisier schemes," and behind his achievements was a forceful, rich, interesting personality, falling clearly within the category indicated by William Roscoe Thayer, when he says: "We understand that any man who is *interesting* may be a proper subject for a biographer."

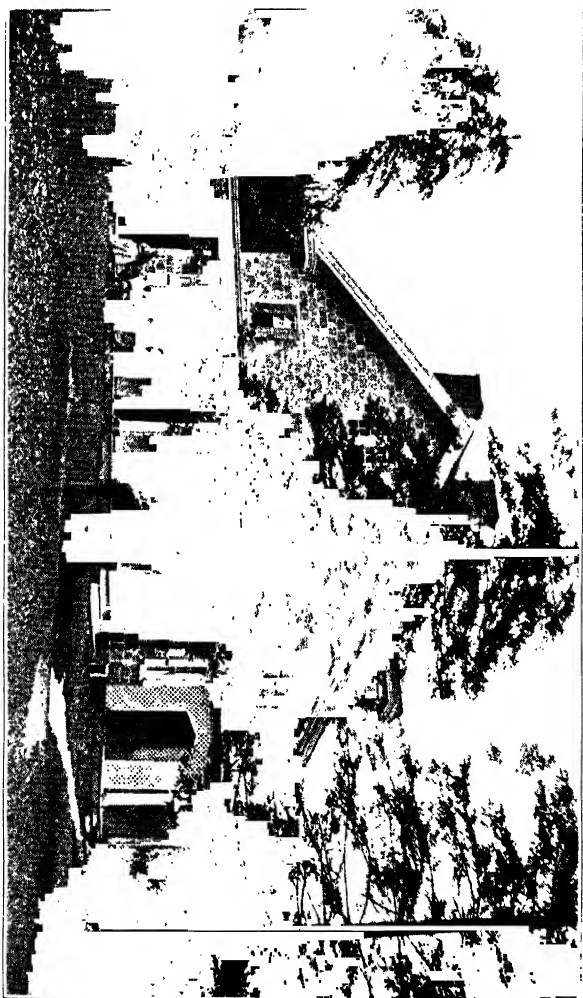
For the beginning of his life we must go back to a somewhat secluded spot among the hills of Chester County, Pennsylvania, two years before the middle of the last century.

CHAPTER I

A BOY'S LIFE IN CHESTER COUNTY

On the eleventh of September, 1777, as the lines were being drawn for the battle of the Brandywine, General Howe and his staff took their position on an eminence three or four miles southwest of West Chester known as Osborne's Hill. In the pleasant valley at the foot of the hill stands a substantial, stone farm-house. The older portion of it, erected a few years after the tide of war had surged through the valley, was the home of Isaac Sharpless's great grandfather, Joshua Sharpless, and in it Isaac Sharpless was born, December 16th, 1848, some seventy years after the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry had died away among the hills. Stanch Quaker opponent of war as he grew to be, he was born practically on the battlefield.

From West Chester to the Sharpless homestead you can go by way of the locality (one can hardly call it a settlement) known as Sconelltown, and pass the site of the old school-house where tradition has it on the day of the battle



THE SHARPLESS HOMESTEAD AT BIRMINGHAM, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNA.

the Friends quietly held their Meeting for Worship despite the grim conflict which was being waged close at hand. The regular Meeting-house became a hospital that day; and more than one poor fellow, both American and British, found a final resting place in quiet Quaker ground, even if Isaac Sharpless's mother and aunt never could quite agree where it was that their grandfather, John Forsythe, had said the graves were. You can follow, too, the road along which Isaac Sharpless's great-grandmother is reported to have ridden home from Meeting, followed by a British officer. Thinking he had an eye for her horse she galloped forward with speed, got away, and on reaching home hid the horse in the cellar.

It is a fair country, this which the early Sharplesses and other Friends chose for their homes. By Isaac Sharpless's time the virgin forests and game haunted wilderness had been transformed into a pleasant, cultivated domain, occupied by thrifty farms, but with nature's charm yet upon it. You may still see it much as it was in his boyhood, a country of rolling hills and stream-watered valleys, with frequent, if not extensive, stretches of woodland, beautiful in any of the season's garbs, whether it be the unsullied whiteness of the snow, sparkling in the winter sunshine, the green leafiness, "bird-encharmed," of

spring and early summer, or the gay golds and russets and reds with which the year cheerfully goes to meet its end. It is not hard to credit the legend that Lafayette, looking over the landscape with Washington, remarked: "Sir, if there be any land in America worth fighting for, it is here."

Amid these general surroundings the Sharpless home occupied a pleasant site. In the valley, at the foot of Osborne Hill, stood the house, constructed of the green serpentine stone common in that neighborhood, and partially shielded by stately sugar-maples and a fine copper beech. In front the meadow fell away to the little stream. With farm buildings, horse yard, garden and pasture land, it was a typical Chester County farm of the period.

Within and around this home revolved the interests of a family of eleven and the activities connected with the business of fattening steers, which later developed into dairying. Of the eight children, the three older than Isaac were two half-sisters and his half-brother, while below him in age were two sisters and two brothers. For many years a beloved aunt shared in the home life and added the influence of her unselfish personality to the upbuilding of the children's characters. Others there were also who

now and again joined the household, for its hospitality took in, from time to time, friends who were in want of a place to live or who needed the country air and occupations.

At the head of home and farm was Isaac's father, Aaron Sharpless, of the fifth generation from the pioneer immigrant, John Sharpless, who came to Pennsylvania in 1682 with William Penn. College education was not common among country Friends in Aaron Sharpless's time. Not different from his contemporaries in this respect, he was a good representative of the group of Quaker farmers who then flourished in Chester County. They were in the main substantial, practical farmers, living in and not above their occupation, who, although they lacked the higher education, of which Isaac Sharpless later was the foremost Quaker promoter, nevertheless added to their sturdy, moral virtues a genuine interest in good literary culture. Aaron Sharpless had received the advantages of the West-town education of his day and by nature possessed the capacity for clear discernment and excellent judgment. Honest to the core, with strong conviction and real spiritual experience, his life expressed a self-denying dedication to the advancement of those things which he believed to be deepest and truest. But his char-

acter was not sombre. He had a rich sense of humor and his frequent and hearty laugh conveyed the sense that life was to be enjoyed as well as to be taken seriously. His ability and character are attested by the positions of responsibility and leadership which he occupied in the affairs of the Society of Friends.

To the task of mothering this large and active household, Sussanna Forsythe Sharpless brought a personality in which power of self-sacrifice and strength to endure were combined with true womanliness and a loving, motherly nature. A product, like her husband, of Chester County Quakerism, her school education had been completed at Westtown, and she shared the same general standards of culture. She, too, held important official posts among Friends.

Even in this day when many parents seem to be taking rather lightly their responsibilities for their children, Friends in general may fairly be classed among those who take parenthood seriously. Isaac Sharpless's father and mother were both deeply concerned for the welfare of their children. Their affection and interest were responded to with love and respect. Yet it was an entirely human family and the children were natural young people, with active minds, plenty of animal spirits and strong wills. Anyone who

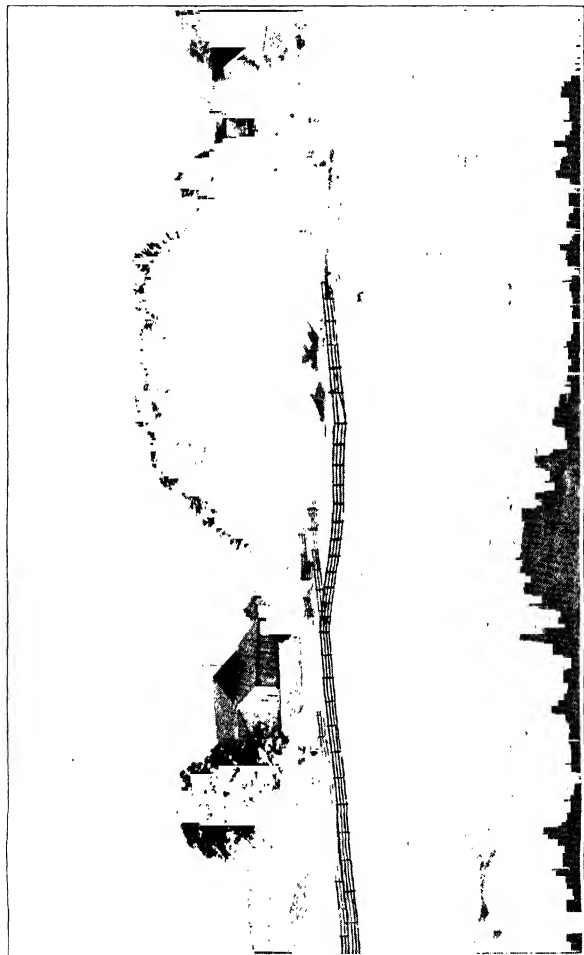
has had anything to do with raising a family will understand that in the Sharpless home all was not undisturbed quiet and decorum. Sometimes, viewing a disordered room, their mother would declare that it "looked like an hurrah's nest." It would have been strange, too, if there had been nothing but perfect harmony at all times among the children. Isaac, himself, no doubt, at times presented a disciplinary problem. He was a restless and strong-willed lad, and these qualities, in combination with the inveterate propensity of his elder brother to tease, presented one-half of an equation on the other side of which there would likely be found occasional ill-temper and trouble. But there were no serious breaches in the harmony of the home life, and the children fulfilled in large measure the great desire of their mother that they should live together in loving unity.

The disciplinary system by which Aaron Sharpless regulated his family was that of paternal autocracy. Father's authority was regarded as a sufficient basis for expecting obedience. It was not necessary for father to give reasons or explain why it was not too wet to pull weeds in the garden when it was too wet to work in the field, or why, when it was too cold for any other work, it was not too cold to

pry up stones from the frozen ground with gloveless fingers. But this authoritarian discipline was administered with reasonableness, if not with much giving of reasons, with wisdom, if not with special appeal to the understanding, with kindness, if not with effort to reach the child's own will, and somehow, whether because of it or in spite of it, the result was fine men and women, morally vigorous and self-controlled.

At breakfast time the family would gather about the table before the spacious fire-place where many a blazing log must have cheered the room with its warmth and glow. "We did a lot of eating in this room," says one of the family, and it is not hard to believe. The silent grace and Bible reading accompanying the meal were the spiritual exercises with which the family began the day.

When not engaged at school the children would participate in the work of the farm. Isaac, like the others, began this as soon as he was old enough. At the age of seven or eight, his mother writes: "Isaac has been in the harvest field until his neck and arms have been burned to a blister." At so youthful an age only lighter chores would fall to his lot, but as he grew older he had his share of the heavier work. He



THE HOMESTEAD FROM THE OPPOSITE SLOPE WITH RADLEY RUN IN THE FOREGROUND.

did it faithfully, but his nature did not respond to it and his heart never went into it.

But to the wholesome recreations of the country-side his boy's heart did go out, as boy's hearts have from age to age. Under date of 4th. mo. 12, 1704, James Logan wrote to John Dickinson while the latter was on a voyage:

"Dear Friend,

"I shall acquaint thee that thy two rugged boys are very lusty, love the river much better this hot weather than their masters' countenances, and the fields and boats far before schools and books * * * * * .

Thy affectionate Friend,

James Logan."

In love of the fields and streams Isaac Sharpless was of one mind with John Dickinson's lusty boys of one hundred and fifty years before him. His words descriptive of the Quaker boy on the farm are surely autobiographical, when he says: "There was the stream to fish, and the charms of fishing grew upon him, till a busy life afterwards only made it more enticing, as memory brought back the great sucker in the mill-dam or trout in the clear stream."

These were summer joys. In winter there were school and lessons, and on winter evenings

the children would assemble for their studies about the central table in the living-room heated by its large stove. Or sometimes the family would gather, and while hands were busy with paring apples or other light occupation Isaac's father would read aloud, not light literature for entertainment merely, but books of substance, often history, which if they were absorbed must have supplemented materially the educational influence of the school. Not many children to-day, probably, become familiar with Josephus and Herodotus, but they were read to the Sharpless children on these winter evenings. If they were not always welcomed for their own intrinsic interest, yet the feeling was, the longer the reading the better, for when it stopped destiny pointed bedward to the dark, cold chambers above.

At other times there would be games—authors, patience or checkers. Isaac was fond of argument and debates furnished diversion. Irving's Conquest of Granada was often a favorite subject of discussion. Then on occasions came livelier forms of amusement. There were certain evenings when father and mother were engaged in serious work which prevented parental supervision of the younger generation. Aaron and Susanna Sharpless were clerks, respectively, of

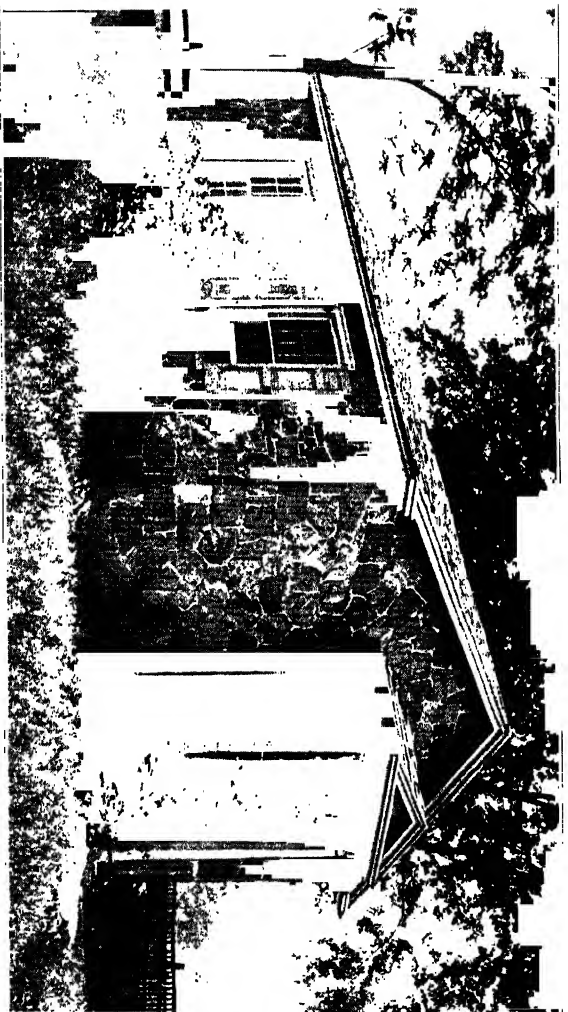
the men's and women's Quarterly Meetings, and when it became time to prepare the summaries of the answers to the Queries they would bring home the work. On the evenings when this was done the children were banished from the living-room, and some idea of the activities which ensued may be gained from their mother's admonition: "Now, children, don't throw the house out of the window."

Another aspect of the family life deeply influenced the boy's character. From the atmosphere of the home he absorbed an attitude which gave religion first place in life. The principles and practices of the Society of Friends permeated and dominated the household. The devotional pause always observed before meals and the faithful daily reading of the Bible at breakfast, "by one whose life was a manifest effort to live by its precepts," wove their quiet influence into his life. Perhaps he did not always listen with attention to the reading of Friends' works, historical and moral, but the impression was conveyed that these things were important. Meeting for Worship was attended, in the middle of the week as well as on First-days, with uncompromising faithfulness. The monthly meetings for business were to be attended by the young as well as by the mature members of the family.

Visiting Friends not infrequently came to the Birmingham Meeting and the Sharpless home was a natural place for them to receive the old-fashioned entertainment. Such an atmosphere worked inevitable results upon the mental and spiritual attitude of the boy. He later indicated something of what it had meant to him, although the words were written impersonally. "The boy, perhaps, could not define Quakerism but he got an idea very firmly that a quiet, kindly, moral life was required of him, an idea which often survived the vastly lower standards among which he had to work out his adult conduct."

In 1854 a small school-house for about twenty children was opened by the Orthodox Friends of the neighborhood, a mile or so from the Sharpless home. Isaac began to attend at once, when he was between five and six years old, and continued at the school until he left for Westtown at fourteen. Here, under the careful and capable teaching of Martha and Elizabeth Sankey, he pursued his elementary studies, and here he and his cousin, Sue Forsythe, as champion runners, used to stand the rest of the school at prisoners' base.

The Birmingham Library, established in 1795, and maintained on a subscription share basis by residents in the neighborhood, mainly Friends,



THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL-HOUSE AT BIRMINGHAM.
Built in 1854. The School was discontinued in 1872.

was not only the oldest library association in Chester County, but was an important educational asset. Young Isaac Sharpless was a diligent reader of its volumes. There was practically no fiction. Swiss Family Robinson, Mayne Reid's *The Desert Home*, and *The Forest Exiles*, were exceptions in favor of the children. Of poetry there was some but not an abundance. The strength of the little library lay in its collection of books of history, biography, exploration, travel and science. Among the histories were Josephus, Herodotus, Rollin, Ranke, Gibbon, Motley and Prescott. Standard biographies from Boswell down were included. Travel and exploration were represented by Franklin and Kane, Livingstone and Du Chaillu. In the fields of social and political science and more general literature, the catalogue of 1843 shows there were Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Abercrombie's *Moral Feelings*, Locke's *Human Understanding*, Paley's *Moral Philosophy* and even Blackstone's *Commentaries*. Isaac Sharpless availed himself generously of the opportunity for reading which this collection afforded. Probably he did not delve into all its volumes, but one may reasonably assume that he speaks out of personal experience when he says, "Rollin and Ranke and Motley and Prescott became a part of the boy's

permanent stock in trade, and he learned to read to good purpose. The wilds of Africa were explored with Livingstone, and the wastes of Greenland with Franklin and Kane; * * *." When he went to Westtown and found, to his surprise, that no one was familiar with Motley's Dutch Republic, he felt it to be quite a loss. Years afterwards, in 1887, while travelling in Holland, he wrote: "I find my Motley adds very much to my interest in these countries."

With home and community both contributing their constructive influences the boy's vigorous capacities of body and mind gathered strength and he developed happily and normally; endowed with a healthy body and physical abilities above the average, and entering with enjoyment and success into games with his comrades; somewhat restless and adventurous and responding to the lure of woods and streams; not fond of the farm work, nor of any manual labor, unless there were some adventure connected with it, yet dutifully doing his part; possessed of an independent and inquiring mind, which from study and sound reading gathered the beginnings of a fund of useful information and acquired a taste for good literature; strong-willed, and with no great respect for authority, but developing the capacity of obedience to conscience and the qual-

ities of simplicity and sincerity; and surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere, not intensely prophetic in character, but from which the boy learned to place the things of God above the things of Caesar.

There is a passage in Plato in which he depicts a vision of souls, who, before they are born, are given an opportunity to choose their own destinies. Had it fallen to Isaac Sharpless's lot to select his own boyhood environment the Quaker community in Chester County at the middle of last century would probably have stood high in the list from which he made his choice. If he did not greatly enjoy the work of the farm there grew up in him an abiding love of his home. When he was older he once said that he never went to Westtown, even after he became a teacher, without experiencing a feeling of homesickness at the beginning of the term. Many years later in the midst of a successful career in a community of quite different character he looked back upon his boyhood home and wrote:

"What better boyhood could there be for a man who is to do great work? A body hardened by years of pure air and active but not excessive exercise; a mind braced by a school life which required things to be done by himself and not by the teacher, and broadened by a careful read-

ing of a limited number of improving books; a character formed by regular duties, the example of conscientious living, the ever present sacredness of moral responsibility, abhorrence of evil, and sympathy with suffering; and a hearty respect for a religion of the simplest character and absolutely without hypocrisy.

“In some respects, to be sure, it was a narrow and circumscribed life; but these qualities may not be the worst evils for the boy. There was to be plenty of breadth and liberty later, and he approached manhood without the feeling that life was a sucked orange; rather it was to him a glorious opportunity of unknown possibilities in which his untried powers of strong resolve and sustained effort, kept well in hand, might do their best.”⁸

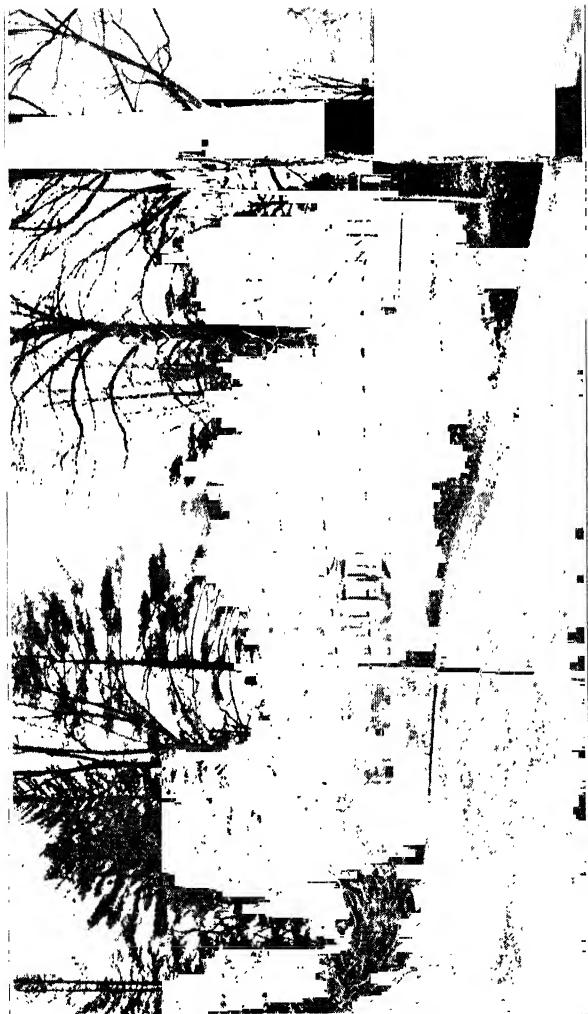
CHAPTER II

AT WESTTOWN BOARDING SCHOOL

It was understood in the Sharpless family that when the boys reached the age of fourteen they should go to the Westtown Boarding School. November, 1862, brought Isaac Sharpless approximately to this age and carried him off to learn the ways and partake of the instruction of the ancient school. Co-educational in name, it was in reality practically two schools. Separated by a sort of "no-man's-land" the girls lived in the west end of the great building and the boys in the east, in almost total isolation from each other. Only in the Meetings for Worship were they allowed to be in the same room together. The feelings of a new boy at the school regarding this arrangement were described in later years by him who, as a fourteen year old lad, now entered the institution: "And again there was the relation of us small boys to those mysterious but glorified beings who inhabited the west end of the house—beings enveloped in a terrible pomp and majesty of sunset clouds, whose openings only at rare intervals (in meetings) re-

vealed them to our rapt vision. With awe we would gaze upon those distinguished boys, who, it was whispered about, received and sent paper missives clandestinely across the gulf. We feared it would be a long time before we could do this, and the fear proved well-grounded.”⁴

Simplicity, not to say meagreness, characterized the rooms and furnishings. Tallow candles had been used, a few to each room, until eight years before Isaac Sharpless entered the school, when gas, manufactured on the premises, was introduced. Separate bedrooms were unknown, and the whole upper story of the building, open from end to end, contained the beds to which the boys were supposed to go peacefully for their night’s repose. The wash room was in the basement. There also was the dining-room. This was reached through a dark hallway. The meals were solemn affairs. Seated at long tables accommodating about fifteen on each side, the boys ate in almost complete silence. Conversation was avoided. Brief requests for food could be heard and plates would be passed, but no general talk was allowed to dispel the gravity of the occasion. The famous Westtown pies, baked by Lyman and Lucy Page, appear to have afforded some compensation for the lack of general cheer. I do not know whether the Westtown Committee was



WESTTOWN SCHOOL IN 1860.

ever obliged to take a stand like that of the Haverford College authorities, who, in an early day of financial stress, declared in a formal announcement: "We aim to furnish each student with two pieces of pie; further than that we do not go, * * * *"

The course of study was limited by the conservative attitude of Friends. It can be outlined in Isaac Sharpless's words: "But what could be taught in a school managed by a great committee which would inevitably be governed by its most conservative members, for the Quaker habit of waiting for practical unanimity gave, in effect, the control to the least progressive. Above the primary branches, there was not much place for the staple of the day, the ancient Classics. They had too many heathen allusions and influences to be safe reading for young Friends * * * *. No one thought of teaching modern languages and the days of laboratory science and text-books of history had hardly dawned. It was not the Quaker idea to teach Theology * * * *."

"There was no danger, theological or intellectual, in reading, or spelling, or penmanship, and these were taught with a success the present might envy, if not emulate. Besides this, two other branches were safe and edifying. The backbone of the school was mathematics * * * *."

In this subject every boy went at his own pace, no rigid classification restrained the genius, or unduly hurried the plodder * * * *. Another subject which might properly exist in unrestrained proportions was English Grammar.”⁵

With all its limitations this education which Isaac Sharpless received at Westtown had its advantages. Measured by its time it was not so antiquated as it appears to-day. In the studies which were emphasized there was good training, and the mathematical education, with traditions inherited from a succession of unusually capable teachers, some of them mathematicians of first rank in their day, maintained a high standard. The use of the individual system in this department gave the bright student scope to satisfy his ambitions and develop his capacities. Perhaps the study of mathematics possessed, also, as Isaac Sharpless was inclined to feel, a special value in producing clearness of thought in the moral realm as well as in the intellectual.

Probably mathematics was not included in the curriculum for its moral value but other features of the school were definitely directed toward this end. Much emphasis was placed upon developing the moral and spiritual life of the pupils. It may be that young Isaac Sharpless was not always appreciative of the Meetings for Wor-

ship, once in the middle of the week and twice on First-days, but these gatherings, attended by men and women members of the Committee, in broad-brimmed hats and ample bonnets, were profound and impressive occasions, and he, like his comrades, received from them something of lasting influence.

As the course of study was conservative so was the system of discipline. Rules and regulations enforced by authority and penalties were relied upon to produce the desired results. Yet undesired results too often ensued. The system, combined with tales of past exploits, challenged high-spirited boys to violations, the venture beyond bounds, the stealing of apples from the orchard, the secret conveyance of pie from the table under one's jacket, to be mashed perhaps in a "jam" on the stairs, or—crowning joy—the achievement at night in the great bedroom of a whirlwind pillow-fight after the "Governor," in his felt slippers, thinking all were asleep, had ended his vigil and betaken himself downstairs. A contemporary and life-long friend of Isaac Sharpless tells us that while Isaac's character was above reproach he was not especially law-abiding under the Westtown regime. His venturesome spirit sometimes carried him beyond bounds, to his father's distress. No doubt

he executed and shared in various escapades of which no record has come down, and learned one side of the game of discipline in which he was to become so skilled a master later.

"It was a game," he wrote in after years regarding this aspect of his Westtown life, "a most interesting one to on-lookers and to participants also, except in the season of defeat, and, as with all good games, these seasons were soon forgotten and forgiven. I have played it on both sides; I cannot say I did not enjoy it on both sides, but I regard it, as Westtown now does, as a most pernicious game to exist in a school. It was an education in strategy and generalship and shrewdness, but it cut the ground away from under the feet of all sympathy and receptivity to influence. It was only during the better moments, the truces of the conflict, that the real work of a good man, or a good boy, could be done. When the boys could feel that, after all, a great heart of a strong man was one with them in making their school life a battle not against flesh and blood, but against the foes of their own household, the conquest of which made them strong and pure and noble; when the teacher could feel in the hearts of the boys not combatants, but loving friends, of indefinite possibilities of development. It was only in the truces when

all this could be known, not continuously, as now.”⁶

But no system of discipline could, by its deficiencies, keep the qualities of a good and strong man from breaking through and making contact with the youthful spirits of the boys. The character and influence of the teachers were of greater consequence than disciplinary methods. One there was who stood out above the others and whose influence on Isaac Sharpless was lasting. This was Samuel Alsop, Jr., first teacher in mathematics and consequently the nearest official to principal which the Westtown of those days knew. “I was his student at Westtown,” Isaac Sharpless wrote in 1897, “his associate at Haverford and his friend in his latter days when ill health drove him to Colorado. I do not know that any man with whom I ever came into personal contact has influenced me more.

“I can never fail to recognize how he dominated the thought and customs of Westtown during the latter part of his stay there. The question of Principalship was solved by his overpowering influence with committees, teachers and scholars * * * *. This was accomplished by the great wisdom, consummate tact and plentiful resource of a man in his twenties. It was done as much by his character as by his in-

tellect. He never shirked a responsibility * * * *.

"There was never any bravado in his strength. Externally he had that quiet, some called it coldness, which so often is associated with reserved strength and concealed fire. No one felt like resisting that composed manner. A statement from him before an assembly of students always went at par. A judgment from him among his associates had indefinite 'weight' * * * *.

"He was a progressive man but so carefully were his advances made that one hardly recognized them until their fruition was evident."

I think it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was Samuel Alsop to whom Isaac Sharpless referred when he said, in mature life: "I find myself to this day asking myself how a certain teacher for whom I had a great respect, would have faced the special difficulty or temptation that comes to me, and his memory still gives me courage and wisdom."

"Schools hide future premiers," says the Chinese proverb. Probably neither his teachers nor his fellow students saw in Isaac Sharpless the promise of the leading educator of his generation in the Society of Friends. This is certainly the testimony of the friend already quoted. As a student he showed ability but not brilliancy. He did not display signs, perhaps

there was little opportunity for it, of the signal administrative capacity of his manhood. But it is characteristic of him that he quietly made progress and at graduation note was taken of his steady improvement in scholarship.

One event perhaps more than any other of his school career at Westtown marked him off as above the average in independence of mind and interest in learning for learning's sake. This was his decision to graduate. To us in 1926 there appears nothing striking about such a step, but sixty years ago at Westtown it had significance. Graduations were not common at the school in those days. One girl received a diploma in 1862, four boys and three girls in the spring of 1863. For some time after that there were few graduations, and by 1870 the total number of graduates was seven boys and seventeen girls. It meant something that Isaac Sharpless in the winter of 1865-1866 decided to be one of those few who pushed their education at Westtown to its fullest extent and registered a completed result. In the spring of the following year with no formal commencement it was announced to the school that Isaac Sharpless had completed all the studies in the scientific course and was entitled to his diploma. His was the only graduation on the boys' side in four years. The

diploma was not ready at the time of the announcement. When it had been prepared some time during the following summer it was first posted at the school and then sent to its owner at his home.



FOUR WESTTOWN TEACHERS, 1871.

From left to right Watson W. Dewees, John W. Cloud, C. Canby Balderston, Isaac Sharpless.

CHAPTER III

FROM PUPIL TO TEACHER

Isaac Sharpless's education was now completed—or at least so it seemed for the time. The question of occupation loomed up. There was farming, the occupation of his father and of his community—he might follow along the traditional lines. But there is rumor of a conversation between Isaac's father and a neighbor one day in which the former said in effect: "Isaac is no good on the farm. I don't know whether I can make a farmer of him." Be that as it may, the young Westtown graduate turned in another direction and received appointment as assistant teacher of mathematics at his old school. This position he assumed in the autumn of 1867, and the following year returned as first teacher of mathematics in place of Samuel Alsop, Jr. "I well remember," he wrote in 1881, "the interview which launched me into the field of pedagogy, when two Committee Friends wound up a summary of my disqualifications by the remark: 'Well, we will appoint thee, but thou might as

well know that it is because we cannot find any-one else to fill the place.' ” Notwithstanding this inauspicious attitude on the part of the Committee he had, in less than two years after graduation, become practically the head teacher in the school.

His self-reliance and independence of mind grew with the years and he did not hesitate to stand by his own views or to challenge those of his associates. A friend who was also a young teacher in the school at the time states that he and Isaac Sharpless were painfully aware that the older teachers regarded them as upstarts. If this was really the case it did not prevent them from exerting a progressive influence in small ways. They introduced additional magazines and Isaac Sharpless began giving lectures on historical subjects. Feeling that their classical education had been weak they read widely in English translations of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* and other works.

Then came another step forward toward higher education—this time for a definite occupational objective. With few if any precedents in his family or in the Society of Friends, Isaac Sharpless decided to go to the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard to fit himself for a career as a civil engineer. To the significance of this

step for the cause of higher education in the Society of Friends I shall have occasion to refer later. Setting himself to the necessary work required for admission he accomplished it in addition to his regular duties as teacher, and with a friend who had been a fellow student entered the Lawrence Scientific School in the autumn of 1872. At the end of the year they graduated with advanced standing, one third, the other ninth, in a large class.

His plans, however, were thwarted by events beyond his control. The financial panic so unsettled business conditions as to make it an unpropitious time to start a career as an engineer, and the autumn of 1873 saw him back at his former post of mathematics teacher at Westtown.

When he had first come to Westtown as teacher, his real powers, hitherto latent, had begun to exhibit themselves. Now after the year at Harvard he became more of a leader and an influence than ever. His adventurous spirit and athletic ability—he was a good baseball player—naturally fitted him for leadership among the boys. Athletics had but recently been introduced at the school, the teachers had not joined much with the boys in their games, and when he and other young teachers began to take part

they found low standards of sports to be prevalent. Cheating was not uncommon. "Master" Isaac was a tonic influence in elevating the standards to those of honor and true sportsmanship.

In 1875 his service at Westtown was terminated by his appointment to a position at Haverford College. During his seven years of teaching at the school he had not only stimulated its intellectual life and invigorated its moral tone but had won a large place in the affections of the students. Haverford College men under his administration may consider that it is saying a great deal, but it has been stated by one of his contemporaries that Master Isaac meant as much to Westtown boys as President Sharpless did to Haverford graduates.

The message of his address on leaving was a recommendation of the pursuit of knowledge and learning, the higher reaches of which Friends in that day appreciated none too much. His rough manuscript of the address may not have been adhered to verbatim. Having apparently recognized the value of athletic games he emphasized the superiority of the intellectual over the physical life. "Then speed on baseball, speed on football, speed on all the host of inferior games, par, hop-scotch, jumping, hunt-the-hare, marbles,



ISAAC SHARPLESS, 1875.

which are wont to rage for a season of a boy's life, but still remember that in the school-room the great work is to be done, out of books the highest gain and the highest pleasure are to be drawn, through the medium of the mind man is to hold communion with the wisest and the purest and the pleasantest of worldly things." Men are gifted intellectually in varying degrees, some richly, some poorly, but the less brilliant is not to be held responsible for his more limited natural endowment. "What can we then do? We can work. We can give our days and nights to study. We can develop and discipline what we have of intellect * * * *. Work is the key which will unlock for us the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It will spread open before us hidden things and mysteries. All that we are, we are by means of it. What is more, all that we hope to be, we must be by means of it. If any student, wearied by the toil and perplexity of study, should repine, let him know that that way lies almost all that he hopes for in life. For what will intellectual strength and culture give us? What is the use of spending so much time at study, I have often asked myself. A little attainment in this line will put us comfortably through the world. It will give us position in life, by means of which we can carry out our

cherished end. It will give us influence over our neighbors, by which we can mould them to justice, to truth, to pure morality. It will give us communion with the best men of all ages, * * * *. It will give us a certain source of unfailing pleasure." But he did not make the intellect supreme. He closed with an appeal to make study and knowledge subservient to the moral and spiritual ends of life.

Commonplace, perhaps, these words seem to-day when the desire for education is widespread, but at a time when young people were not flocking to universities by the thousands, when college education was not the rule among the rank and file of Friends, and uttered in the stronghold of conservatism in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, they had significance.



ISAAC SHARPLESS AND LYDIA COPE SHARPLESS, 1876.

CHAPTER IV

A PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

The important results which flow from seemingly commonplace events or situations are at times impressive. Samuel Alsop, Jr., had not only exerted an influence over Isaac Sharpless but undoubtedly Isaac Sharpless's personality had made its impress upon Samuel Alsop. This is to be read between the lines of history, at least if the statement is to be credited that it was Samuel Alsop, now teaching at Haverford, who was the one most instrumental in bringing him to the College. To whatever influences due, he received appointment in 1875 as instructor at Haverford. He, himself, would modestly have us believe, according to his account in the *Story of a Small College*, that the appointment was in the same category as that at Westtown, and that he was chosen because no one else could be found. In both cases his early advancement to more important posts suggests that the governing authorities were more appreciative of his qualities than he gives them credit for.

He assumed his new position in the fall of 1875. In August of the following year he and Lydia Trimble Cope, of West Chester, were married and the young people—he was then twenty-seven—settled down in quarters in Founders Hall.

The number of students in the College in these years, forty-three in 1875-76, and forty-two in 1876-77, was the smallest in the history of the College with the exception of 1866-67 when the number touched bottom at thirty-seven. Moreover at the beginning of the College year in 1875 the discouraging feature was that there were only four freshmen.

With this group of students Isaac Sharpless as the youngest member of the Faculty had ample opportunity for contacts. While his technical training lay chiefly in the field of mathematics his teaching was not confined to that subject. History, chemistry, physics, anatomy and astronomy at one time or another fell to his lot. In addition to teaching he was, for his first year, Assistant-Superintendent, a disciplinary post, carrying the duty of seeing that various regulations were observed.

As a teacher he was a success. His keen intellectual abilities and his worth of character made their impression despite a somewhat un-

polished exterior. Underneath, all the time, were the true qualities of the gentleman, but like Lincoln he carried with him into his new life a degree of outward awkwardness and crudity. The Quaker emphasis upon simplicity and lack of regard for show perhaps contributed to his caring little about dress. His appearance before his classes in those early days might have caused trouble for a weaker man. With necktie hanging in stringy fashion, lounging back in his chair with his legs crossed and one big boot well out to the fore, with trousers, perhaps, tucked into his boot-tops, if it were wet weather, one can imagine that in a lesser person such an exterior and manner might have presented vulnerable points for the ever ready shafts of student wit, and that he might have failed to command the respect essential to successful teaching. But his personality rose superior to outward appearance and won the day. His mental power, his moral force, and his ability to handle his subject in class—for he was a very good talker on such occasions—made their impression upon his students through any covering of awkwardness and they gave him their respect.

In his chosen subject he was, if not a great mathematician, a worthy representative of his generation in the succession of Quaker scholars

made notable by Enoch Lewis (1776-1856), John Gummere (1784-1845), Benjamin Hallowell (1799-1877), Samuel Alsop, Sr. (1813-1888) and Samuel Alsop, Jr. (1842-1888). All the teaching in mathematics before long was given to him and in 1879 he was made professor of the subject. At the same time, after having started and had charge of a chemical laboratory for two years, he was given the professorship of astronomy.

During these years he was not only teaching but was producing some scholarly literary work. He had had some slight experience in writing at Westtown where a monthly periodical in manuscript form was issued by the teachers and older students under the name of *The Cabinet*. Now as professor at Haverford College he began seriously producing for publication. In the six years 1879-1884 as many books, on mathematics, surveying, astronomy, and natural philosophy were put out under his authorship or editorship—in two cases with a collaborator. There came also from his pen a succession of articles on astronomical subjects, which, with the reports from the observatory, made the College department of astronomy widely known in the academic world. His scholarship was soon recognized and honored. In 1883 the University of

Pennsylvania conferred upon him the honorary degree of Sc.D. and six years later he received the degree of LL.D. from Swarthmore College.

This early period of College teaching was not, however, a wholly untroubled time of scholastic work and honors.

On his arrival at Haverford in the autumn of 1875 he found himself confronted not only with the task of teaching but with the disciplinary duties pertaining to the position of Assistant Superintendent. The ideas and system of the old school of discipline were still in force. Good order and wholesome life were best to be promoted, it was thought, by a variety of rules, mandatory and prohibitory, enforced by authority. "The system was one imposed by men who had high standards of living and intended to perpetuate them by prohibiting whatever in their judgment would jeopardize them." It was the duty of the Assistant Superintendent to enforce many of the regulations—to see that collections, study hours and bed requirements were observed, to detect absentees, to deal with cushion fights and other infractions of quiet and good order.

Of the difficulties of the position the Assistant Superintendent has himself told us. "To me the life was one of alternate pleasure and confusion. When we got into healthy human relations, talk-

ing sports or studies, there was much enjoyment in their honest earnestness. To meet them in their rather reckless disregard of rules for disregard's sake, when they set fire to the leaves in the fall without caring for damage to trees or buildings, when they surreptitiously at midnight went through the operation with heathen ceremony of burying an unpopular author, when the college horse was borrowed for nocturnal expeditions, when the hundred similar efforts by day and night which it was considered the duty of the Assistant Superintendent to keep pace with and disintegrate before or after the occurrence, then life assumed the proportions of a burden which made it undesirable. After one year's trial I declined further service in this field."⁸

But after a respite of seven years he was asked, in 1883, to take up the disciplinary task again, this time as Superintendent. "Of course I now knew what I was getting into. Without any seriously worked out theory of discipline I had some hope that the good-will achieved by several years of rather pleasant relations in the class-room would be enough of an asset to carry me through the first dangers. The college, without being fundamentally demoralized, was more or less at the mercy of a youthful group of ungoverned students. I knew that this must be

controlled or I should go the way of all failures. I must match my shrewdness with theirs, my freedom from mistakes and fairness in emergencies with their easy defiance of rules and order, my self-control and self-discipline with their promptness to take advantage of an unwise step. It is not necessary to go through the petty struggles of the year. Of course any popularity I had stored up soon departed. To me it was an overworked year * * * *. We worried through it, however, and these young men, now grown to manhood, have been among my good friends ever since. But the life did not look good to me and I declined further service under the conditions which existed. It performed for me, however, the inestimable service of teaching me some of the principles upon which college discipline must be founded, and the futility of making it a contest in which victory would rest with the strongest battalions.”⁹

Compared with the past the College in these days was not, perhaps, having any greater difficulties than it had gone through in other times, but the conditions were not entirely satisfactory. The number of students had, it is true, more than doubled in the first ten years of his association with the college. In its general affairs, however, the flood tide had not set in. There was

financial stress. But the weakest point, probably, was the low morale. The personal moral habits of the students were generally good, but there were splits and factions in the student body, opposition between students and faculty in matters of discipline, lack of loyalty to the college, and on the whole a somewhat anarchic situation. The young professor, now about thirty-five, with family responsibilities, felt some unsettlement. "Some of us," he says, "seriously questioned whether we could advise our young friends to enter a college in which law and order seemed to rest upon such an attenuated support, and in which cohesion was so lacking. Indeed, we were seriously considering a more secure place for ourselves, a distrust which, when we look back at the conditions, now seems unjustifiable."¹⁰

CHAPTER V

BESIDE THE HEARTH

Perhaps his temporary misgivings about the future at Haverford were enhanced by a growing family. Throughout his married life, his wife, his children and his home constituted, on the human side, the center of his world. When not absent its daily interests were dear to him and when away on business or recreation his letters were frequent. "The best things in life come to married people, and no one's life is complete without it," he wrote to one of his daughters at the time of her engagement; and in the same letter: "Thy mother is a striking example of success in managing a difficult problem in the way of a husband." The home was maintained continuously at Haverford except for summers at the seashore or mountains, and the year spent in England.

From their early years on he kept close to his children in spirit. "He had a very real sympathy with children," writes one who has the best of reasons to know, "remembering vividly

his own childhood, and they detected this with unerring instinct, even though he made little effort at outward advances." The duties of his work might prevent him from giving as much time as he would have wished to his family, but they did not draw him away in interest from the members of the little circle in the home. The maintenance of discipline there, the upholding of moral standards, the teaching of religious truth, were attended to, but not with an austerity or sternness which was a barrier between father and children. Prompt attendance might be required at the daily Bible reading before breakfast, and real delinquencies might be dealt with uncompromisingly, but to the children the disciplinarian never hid for long the loving father who entered with sympathy into their play, their tasks, their interests. When the children were small he could listen while they told of the little things which to them seemed great, or he could entertain with stories and drolleries; as they grew older he participated in their games, carried on discussions with them as with equals, and when problems and decisions came to the fore gave sympathetic counsel when wanted. He took an "enthusiastic interest," writes one of his children, "in whatever was happening to all of us * * *. Whether it was a game, an examina-

tion, or some more serious problem that we took to him, we were never made to feel that it was beneath his consideration, but rather that it was a matter in which he was concerned as well as ourselves." But this close interest was accompanied by reserve. He did not force himself upon his children. Rebukes were rare, praise infrequent, advice sparingly offered.

The following picture of him in his home has been furnished by one of his children: "The memory of the slamming of our front door with a certain characteristic firmness and finality and of the consequent 'There's Father,' recalls the atmosphere of home and family and evening ingathering which link together in recollection the whole of childhood and youth for all of his children. Immediately after the slam he appeared wherever the family happened to be assembled, and his visible satisfaction was a large factor in creating the very atmosphere which he so obviously enjoyed. This memory seems to hold good for all stages, whether we were building block-houses on the floor, putting up skates and sleds, or home for school or college vacations.

"In the very beginnings there were horrific '*BEAR STORIES*,' or, even better, '*TWO-EYE STORIES*,' terrifyingly suggestive as to what might be peering from the forest depths. All were

quite satisfyingly free from anything approaching a moral. There were knees to climb, which were forever collapsing in some new and unexpected way, and Mother Goose rhymes which would start out quite according to the book and suddenly would wander into original and ravishing absurdities.

“Indeed neither of our parents used on us any ‘heard-of-maxims,’ and if such threatened to become a burden from some other source, they were frequently interrupted by shockingly immoral bits of advice such as—‘Never do to-day what you can put off till tomorrow,’ or—‘Don’t allow yourself to become economical.’ And, in fact, though with him the practice of economy was an ever present necessity, his spirit remained far above its more unattractive manifestations. As we grew older the remark, ‘Father, I need some money,’ if it was reasonable, would most probably be answered by a shower of some few dollar-bills, flung at one altogether in the spirit of a king scattering gold pieces among the populace.

“Of course there were many times during which he was completely absorbed in his own weighty thoughts and problems, and was not to be addressed. But his mood did not interfere with the flow of family chatter; and when be-

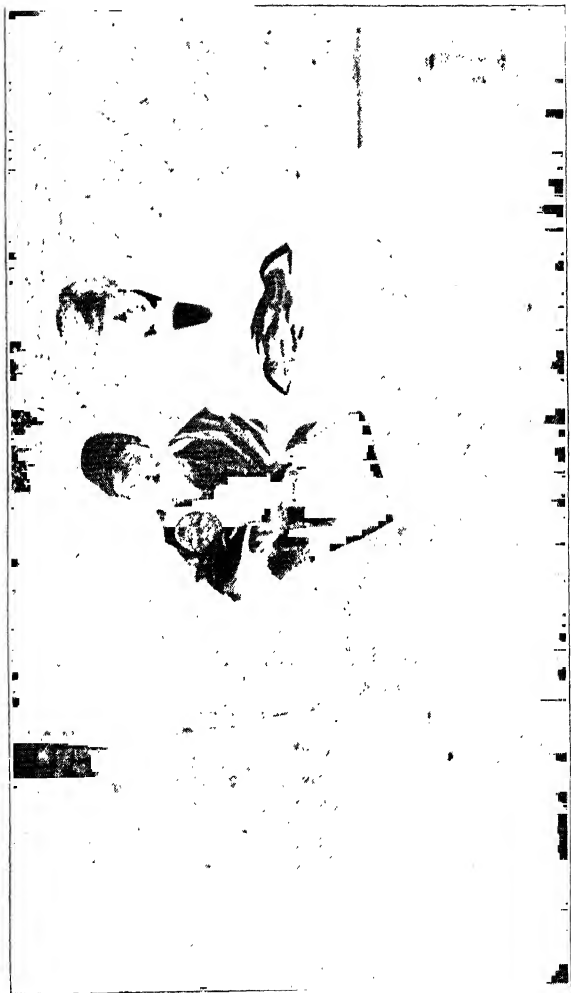
cause of an undue amount of giggling we were banished from the dinner table, we came back with the giggles rigidly under control, but the spirits behind them quite unabashed. By the time both front and back stairs were occupied and the third victim had to take to the landing everyone was enjoying the fun.

"But even his absorbed silences were capable of being interrupted by some whimsicality. His glasses hung by a black cord, and, having been called into service for the morning paper, might drop quite unexpectedly into his coffee; from it they were solemnly flicked into his water, there to repose till the bell was rung and the wreckage cleared away. Of course such performances were hugely admired by the young, as it was intended they should be. Their author took a naive pleasure in this admiration which even to a child was amusing and lovable.

"Maxims and mannerisms might be immoral and irresponsible, but there was no possibility of misunderstanding the moral issues which were regarded as really important. The rare rebukes were short, final and absolutely devastating. But honest reflection acknowledged them just. No compromise was allowed, and you were referred to your conscience in a manner which cut off all escape and all excuses. Always our friends ex-

pected to be afraid of our father, and were surprised at the atmosphere of teasing, of fooling, of argument, of sense and nonsense which made up our family conversation; at the freedom with which we would disagree with him or wander around with him at cricket and foot-ball games, often not spoken to but never made unwelcome. I, for one, never dreamed of being afraid of him except when I had a pretty guilty conscience and then—I quake still in memory. He had an uncanny way of finding out things, as others besides his children know. I still remember the sinking of heart which accompanied a beginning such as:—‘What’s this I hear about what happened up at the school to-day?’ For small and essentially harmless childish peccadilloes he showed tolerance and even quite frank amusement. Great was the relief when the pendulum swung that way.

“Tardiness was especially unpopular. The inevitable before-breakfast Bible-reading was a daily crisis to be met as might be. The penalties for non-attendance were severe and inexorable. The reading was done in a fine harmonious voice, with great appreciation of the sonorous qualities of Bible language, but it was a disheartening sound to one still above struggling with shoe-laces. The only compromise was a willingness to



THREE GENERATIONS.
Suzanna F. Sharpless, Isaac Sharpless and Katharine T. Sharpless, now Klein.

wait till one already on the stairs should arrive below. This rule was discovered to be capable of abuse in a large family where co-operation was good and relays easily arranged.

“If rebukes were infrequent and telling, so was praise. All scraps were treasured and I imagine are still remembered. Sometimes the habitual reserve was broken by some brief disconnected remark on more intimate matters, the more impressive from the insight it gave into thoughts and feelings seldom confided to us. One of these was:—‘Does thee know thee was very wise in thy choice of a mother?’

“We saw him chiefly at meal times and during the too few evenings which he spent at home, usually in the chair kept sacred to him—feet to the fire, reading, sleeping or joining in the family discussions, as he paced up and down through the rooms. After the ‘Bear-story’ stage had passed there were games—chess, dominoes, checkers and patience. Patience was an especial favorite because of its mathematical qualities. Lessons had short shrift when Father was ready for a game. One patience tournament survived a whole winter and a trip to California. Scores were exchanged by mail.

“More vividly than any of these stand out the discussions and arguments that distinguished

the later years—arguments about everything and anything that was arguable—England and Ireland, Cromwell and King Charles, votes for women, pragmatism, the management of Bryn Mawr College, the car strike in Philadelphia—anything at all. Usually the family sided against him, and no one was so pleased as he with a sharp retort, a telling argument, or the able support of a differing opinion. Often at the end we would discover that he had been agreeing with us from the first. Experience has since taught us how many people cannot bear disagreement, especially from their own families, and how frequent and painful a part of most arguments is a rising temper.

“Fishing trips, for the most part, we enjoyed by proxy. They were accompanied by familiar signs: testing lines, sorting over hooks and flies, packing the creel and the importation of live bait, squirming and clicking in the bait box or swimming in horrid swarms in the bath tub. After the trip there were sometimes fish to clean; always there were interesting tales to listen to, for every trip was a success no matter what its result in fish. Best of all treats, sometimes a lucky child was taken along. Who could forget one moment of such a trip in such company!—the atmosphere of radiating contentment, or the

attitude of complete indifference to all responsibilities? If the fish bit there was a considerable intensification of the pleasure, in any case the contentment never ceased to radiate. On the way to the fishing ground and during dinner there was always something interesting to be extracted from the guide or captain—local politics, elements of navigation or woodcraft, or outrageous yarns of former catches and the predicaments of city green-horns.

“Last of all come memories of him as a Grandfather. There remains the picture of a greatly contrasted pair on their daily trip to the college for mail, after his retirement had brought some leisure; through the woods confidently hand in hand, with no lack of respectful attention on his part to the tales of squirrels or trips to the zoo which were being soberly unfolded far below. A certain one-year-old elected him above all others and refused to be out of his arms when he was in sight. She would stagger and stump into his forbidden sanctum whenever escape was possible, calling to him delightedly by a name of her invention, always sure of a welcome whatever work she interrupted. Her obvious preference was the subject of not a little quiet boasting.

“These memories and many more bring a feeling very like resentment toward the popular im-

pression of our Father as purely a public man, as though he could possibly belong to Haverford College, or to Quakerism, or to anything but us, when we know by the test of experience how much his family meant to him and how much he meant to his family."

CHAPTER VI

A COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S PROBLEMS

"Phila., 5th. mo. 9th, 1884.

"Isaac Sharpless, S.B.

"Dear Friend.

"At a special meeting of the Board of Managers of the Corporation of Haverford College held 6th. mo. 6th., 1884, the Executive Committee and President Chase presented a proposition creating the office of Dean of the Faculty, and recommended thy appointment thereto in addition to the Professorship now held by thee. After careful consideration their recommendation was approved by the Board, and thee was appointed to this office in accordance with the details set forth in the accompanying memorandum. I feel safe in assuring thee of the earnest good wishes of every member of the Board for thy success in these increased responsibilities, and their desire, individually and collectively, to give thee every support in their power toward making the

financial condition of the College as good as its literary and moral reputation.

“On behalf of the Board of Managers,
Howard Comfort, Sec’y.”

The memorandum referred to in the above letter contained, *inter alia*, the following provisions:

“Isaac Sharpless, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, shall be Dean of the Faculty.

“In the latter position, as the Executive Officer, he shall be charged with the business management, the discipline, and the domestic affairs of the College, including the care of the property at all seasons of the year.

* * * * *

“Applications for admission shall be made to him, and the responsibility and duty of deciding them, under the rules of the Board, shall rest with him. With the approval of the President of the College and the Board of Managers, he shall make all appointments of Professors, and other instructors and fix their salaries. He shall regulate their hours of work and duties, and shall have power to remove them, when, in his judgment, the interests of the College require it.

* * * * *

“Isaac Sharpless shall be guaranteed a salary

of \$2200 per year, and in addition thereto he shall receive annually the yearly surplus of the Corporation, provided that his compensation for any one year including his salary and receipts from surplus shall not exceed \$6000."

By this arrangement Isaac Sharpless became, in effect, President, and something even more than President, of the College three years before his appointment by name to the chief office. Exceptional as the situation may seem it was not an entirely new departure. In 1871 the Board had turned over the entire control of the College to three members of the faculty, President Gummere and Professors Chase and Dillingham. When President Gummere died and Professor Chase became President his classical studies so largely absorbed his time that "the business and detail management fell almost exclusively into the hands of Professor Alsop."

The virtual abdication of the Board and the control of the College by Isaac Sharpless lasted, however, only two years. It was terminated not by failure, nor by action of the Board, but by his own decision in a manner which sheds light upon his character.

Although not intended there was a sort of irony in the provision that he should have all the profits up to a certain maximum return. Of

this he subsequently said: "As the profits for years had been negative, and made up by members of the Board, there were probably some incredulous smiles" when the proposition was approved. At the end of the first year, to his own surprise, and no doubt more to the surprise of the Board, he had cleared his maximum salary and had something over to put into the college treasury. The second year was similarly successful.

Why did he not continue the arrangement? The Board was satisfied and he was doing well. He has told us the reason:

"While this income was personally very gratifying, there came with it the feeling that I was hardly strong enough to resist the temptation to cheapen the College for my personal benefit. The Board seemed satisfied to be relieved of all financial responsibility which had burdened them for so many years, but I was conscious that the only way to continue the profitable scheme was to keep down the cost of teaching, which meant a lower grade of professors, and to admit students whose qualifications were rather the ability to pay prices than their mental and moral fitness to keep up to the standards of the Haverford of the past. When I remembered the sacrifices of earlier days to

maintain these standards, the reputation the College had already acquired as the result of these sacrifices, my own hopes for an enlarged future in the quality as well as the amount of work to be done, I became satisfied that the element of personal profit should not enter into the plans, that there were some things worse than debts, that the Board must retake the obligation to meet increased expenses for teaching and equipment, and that Haverford must not be open to the charge of delaying its expansion in order to put money into the pocket of any individual."

"At the end, therefore, of the two fat years, I asked the Board to place me on the salary list at a moderate figure and resume the active control of the college." ¹¹

In 1886 the presidency became vacant through the death of President Pliny Chase who had succeeded his brother in the office. After looking over the field of possible appointees the Board in March, 1887, notified Isaac Sharpless of his appointment, though he says "the President of the Board told me afterwards with great urbanity and consideration, he had hoped that a more satisfactory selection could have been made." The formal inauguration took place in May. The alumni were represented by Clement L. Smith, of the class of 1860, and at the time Dean of Har-

vard College. Perhaps no one, not even himself, fully appreciated the significance of his words when he referred to the occasion as one which "must mark an epoch in the progress of the College."

About one month later the new President sailed for Europe, partly to hunt a professor of mathematics in England, partly to participate in an astronomical expedition headed by Professor Young of Princeton to observe at Moscow an eclipse of the sun. The first objective yielded fruit, and in the autumn among the names of new officers at the college appeared that of Frank Morley, A.B., A.M., Cambridge.

This was his first taste of European travel and it gave him much enjoyment. To his family he wrote interesting and spicy letters narrating events and impressions. A number of friends happened to sail with him on the *Etruria* and his letters from ship-board were flavored with personal references: "Tom Scattergood reads *Little Lord Fauntleroy*"; "Wayne MacVeagh and his wife were very active and prominent inside the harbor, but have since totally disappeared from sight"; "Marianna Ladd is a good talker though hopelessly seasick"; "Ladd thought he heard a dog barking at a farm house we were passing." After enjoying travels in Eng-

land he went to the Continent on his way to Moscow. Stockholm appealed to him greatly. "It is altogether the best place I have been in." From Moscow came a very different tone:

"If ever a fellow was sick of a place I am of Moscow * * * *. It has rained every day for a week and I do not think it has been clear at 7.30 in the morning one day since I have been here, so that there seems to be small chance of my seeing the eclipse after all * * * *.

"Among my other miseries is the absence of books. I can buy English and French novels, but nothing else scarcely in these languages. Wallace's Russia I can get in German with all dangerous passages expurgated, but I can't read the German * * * *. The only recompense to my melancholy condition is that I am allowing the Kremlin and these magnificent Greek churches to soak into me so that I am sure I shall never forget them.

* * * *

"The droshky drivers worry me to ride, but as it is always necessary to bargain with them beforehand and beat them down, and as I can't talk to them, there is not much chance of coming to terms, but the sight of a man with good clothes on, on foot, is evidently very unexplainable and exasperating to them."

A laconic sentence in a letter from London told of the result of the astronomical expedition: "The eclipse was a failure owing to the clouds."

Isaac Sharpless had already given evidence, in his resignation from the position of Dean of the Faculty, that he placed the welfare of the College above personal interests. He now approached the responsibilities of the presidency in the same spirit. In his inaugural address, after personal words of thanks and of modesty regarding his ability to maintain the standards of the past, he said: "But all personal matters must sink out of sight in the face of the towering interests of the College itself, whose past is secure, but the development of whose future is a problem of sufficient magnitude to engage all the wisdom and energy which can be brought to bear upon it." For the next thirty years he was to translate the spirit of those words into life.

Up to this time Haverford had been first a school, then a college, but had not been ambitious to fill a larger role than college in the educational scheme. Would the new president change this policy? "We believe," said Francis T. King, speaking for the Board of Managers at the inauguration proceedings, "that he will support the old idea of 'the College,' which has its definite place in the American system of education,

different from but not less important than the place of the grammar school, the technical school, the professional school and the university—institutions with all of which it should stand in friendly alliance.” Those who had this faith in the new president must have felt satisfaction as they heard him a few minutes later say: “A Friends’ school is perhaps better characterized on its intellectual side by honesty, thoroughness and simplicity than by more pretentious virtues. In arranging our courses we must bear these in mind, do what we do well, and not attempt a great multiplicity of departments.” Neither personal ambition for himself nor the allurements which bigness and quantity might hold out for the College caused him to alter his faith in this policy. More than a quarter of a century later he wrote: “Many small colleges do excellent work, oftentimes the very best, for the four undergraduate years. But here their usefulness usually ends, and in the attempt to retain their students as graduates they sacrifice them to their own misplaced ambitions.”¹²

In the first decade or so of his presidency three subjects confronted him as major problems—the faculty, discipline and the course of study. On his appointment the situation relating to the faculty was unsettled. Within a year or two

Thomas and Pliny Chase, with their brilliant intellects and achievements in scholarship, had both passed out of the College life. The loss was severe. There were those who felt that much which distinguished Haverford had departed with these two scholars and that it was preferable to seek an education elsewhere. On the other hand the conditions were such as to give him a fairly free hand in building up a faculty of his own making. There were several vacancies. Of those that remained all were comparatively young men—the oldest was about forty—and they were sympathetic and capable. The situation inevitably claimed his immediate attention. At his inauguration he announced the establishment of a department of English which had been filled by “a specialist in its study, a graduate of Haverford, Harvard and Freiburg, and a teacher of successful experience.”* Another announcement on the same occasion told of the appointment of a Director of the Observatory. By the autumn of 1887 the faculty list included six new professors, although two were still studying in Europe in preparation for their duties. At the beginning of another academic year a new department of physics was opened

* Dr. Francis B. Gummere, whose brilliant teaching of English literature inspired a succession of students for thirty-one years, 1888-1919.

under a professor holding a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins.†

Back of this policy of building up a group of strong teachers and scholars was his belief that such a body was the keystone of the collegiate arch. This belief he expressed in later years by saying: "To bring a class of young people into effective contact with men of learning and character is the whole object of the accumulated endowment, of the buildings and equipment, of the labors of the board of trustees, and of the management of the president."¹³ In searching for professors he did not look mainly for mature scholars. Indeed he expressed the view that "the young man conscious of expanding powers, with his future in his hands, keenly in touch with youth, and with a conscience and outlook which demand the giving of his best, in a sympathetic atmosphere is probably the most profitable investment for a college."¹⁴ Ability in research he regarded as valuable but not primary. What he wanted was sound scholarship and capacity for teaching. He believed in having a few men of first rank in scholarship. As he once expressed it to the Carnegie Foundation: "We mean to keep some men who would command high salaries in the best universities." He real-

† Dr. Henry Crew, who later became a distinguished physicist. He continued as professor at Haverford until 1892.

ized the financial implications of such a policy. While he did not impute avarice to teachers he knew that compensation in that field was relatively low and that he who paid the piper best could call the best tune. His mature judgment was: "In the long run the service will be as the salary." This opinion was based upon some experience. In 1892 two important members of the faculty left to assume positions with larger salaries at other institutions. President Sharpless's report to the Board in the autumn of that year pointed the lesson of this occurrence in the following words: "The question of maintaining a Faculty is becoming one of greater difficulty with each succeeding year. The institutions for preparing Professors as well as those for using them are raising their demands continually. It costs more for a Professor to secure his stock in trade, and the ability of most institutions to pay is rapidly augmenting. We must keep pace with this march or one by one our good men, unless they are restrained by personal loyalty to the College, will leave us. The time is close at hand when Haverford cannot afford to offer less than \$3000 to every satisfactory professor at the head of an important department."

Between 1886 and 1889 the expenses for salaries were increased about fifty per cent, from

about \$20,000 to about \$30,000. With the financial stress then prevalent this meant taking some risks. It meant, too, putting the major effort into the development of personnel rather than into material improvements. Chase Hall was completed in 1888 but eight lean years followed, so far as building was concerned. In 1896 came Whitall Hall and then the period of deferred improvement was further prolonged.

The problem of discipline soon forced itself upon his attention by conditions which could not be ignored. The number of students at the college had grown rather rapidly during the preceding ten or twelve years and a new clientele was developing. Many of these new students were desirable young men with brains and character as well as money and prestige, but there were others gifted with too small a measure of the desirable qualities. These brought with them low moral standards and threatened to poison the College atmosphere with an evil influence. With this situation Isaac Sharpless dealt quietly, but unhesitatingly. Despite the fact that the college needed the money of these students and the further fact that some of them came from families of standing, whose displeasure would be undesirable, he proceeded, without stir, gradually to eliminate them. As opportunity offered,

in particular at vacation time, the undesirables would leave and not return. While this was going on he largely kept his own counsel, and deemed it best not to attempt to meet with explanations the uncomplimentary accounts of the College given forth by the young men expelled. But the departures did not pass unnoticed. Dissatisfaction grew up in certain quarters within the Board of Managers and later a crisis arose and nearly eventuated in a way which would have seriously altered Isaac Sharpless's career as well as the future of Haverford College.

In the meantime, while opposition was gathering power but was still beneath the surface, he asked and was granted a year's leave of absence for the purpose of travel and study in Europe. Taking his family with him he spent the year 1890-1891 in this way, mainly in England. Some valuable literary contributions resulted—including an account of municipal government in three leading English cities and a study of English school education. But his absence from the College gave opportunity for criticism and opposition to gather headway, and when he returned it was to find that serious trouble threatened. Before long the pent-up forces of dissatisfaction broke through the dam. In a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board in the year

1891-92 a direct attack was launched against him by some of the Managers. Loss of prestige among families of standing was charged. Other weaknesses were alleged. Probably, as he himself said later, those who sought to oust him, felt that they were acting for the best interests of the College. For him there were two possible ways of meeting the onslaught. One was to put his back to the wall and fight. The other was to let the current have its way. He chose the latter. Immediately he tendered his resignation. Another position offered, and he had almost accepted it. Part of the Board, however, stood by him. As the real facts became known support for him grew and his resignation was declined. Without rancour he went on with his duties, re-established cordial relations with the Board, and, with no recurrence of friction, finally came to be the dominant influence in it.

The difficulties of discipline in the College, however, while not so critical as opposition within the management, were not so quickly overcome. The old regime had not yet been discarded. It meant, on the side of the officials, rules, penalties, authority; on the side of the students, opposition, strategy, violations. The influence of the alumni favored the continuation of the spirit of matching wits against govern-

ment. Isaac Sharpless confronted these conditions no longer as a novice. Through the experience and thought of the years there had developed in his mind a philosophy and policy of discipline more liberal and more modern than that under which he had grown up and which had hitherto prevailed at Haverford. He had reached a pretty definite conclusion that for college students the system of a multitude of rules imposed from above was not the method by which the best results could be obtained. Writing in 1887 of the "guarded education" so esteemed by Friends he said:

"The smaller the children, I will not say the greater the importance of the guards, but the more arbitrarily and absolutely the guards must be applied. As they grow older the guards should come to be to some extent self-applied; until in college government, the effort should be more to secure the guards by possessing solid official example and precept and a moderate official restraint, and mainly by encouraging in student minds a plane of thought, which makes the self-imposition of guards a matter of imperative duty. It is possible to carry our arbitrary guardianship too high in the scale. I would lay it down as a general rule that restraints are evils, necessary evils if the results cannot be other-

wise secured, but productive of harm in diminishing sympathy between teacher and child. The evil becomes greater as we go up in the educational grade, and we must not impose the guards too rigidly by authority, when we can get them imposed through voluntary action. But nevertheless they must be imposed."¹⁵

In his inaugural address were a few sentences which spelled a new policy. "Now, I find these students, except in cases of certain gusty excitements, which are always temporary, are very reasonable, and the more their reason is appealed to the more it is developed, and I find that our constituency still approves of the objects which our founders sought to gain. They gained it by arbitrary rules, but we propose to try to gain it by working in conjunction with our students for the common good; not by the absence of rules, for no community can work in that manner, but by reducing their number to the minimum necessary to secure the desired results. We hold that restraints are evil in themselves, unless self-imposed, though in many cases inevitable. Where the morals and *morale* of the College require them, they must exist; but a little experience in the last two or three years would seem to indicate that the Haverford of the past thought them necessary where they were not."

Looking back from after years to this period he states that the feeling which existed with more or less definiteness in his mind was that "There must be a change in the relations between the governing body and the students. The endless friction of the past must be abolished, not by winning in the game but by the gradual development of the idea of common interests and common loyalty which would take away the tendency to form hostile camps. * * * * All unnecessary restrictions must be abandoned without, however, making fewer demands for honest work and good conduct. Influence must supersede prohibition."¹⁶

In this new policy, in place of omnipresent authority, there were three allied factors upon which he relied to maintain standards and an orderly life — faculty influence, student public opinion and loyalty, and an increasing degree of student self-government.

Something more than the conception of such a policy was necessary. It would not be self-executing upon its mere announcement. It had to be woven into the fabric of the college life and the weaving process was not free from difficulties, disappointments and discouragements. For some years "The students did not seem to yield loyally to a kindlier administration of the

discipline." Gradually, however, a change took place. In his annual report to the Board in 1897, ten years after he assumed the presidency, he said: "We have now got out of the stage when riots and rebellions, malicious annoyances, interspersed with faculty investigations, break up the regular duties of the college." This did not mean that all disciplinary disturbances had permanently ceased. But the sting of the serpent had been drawn. In 1911 in a letter to one of his family he referred to a small difficulty: "College matters are going quietly. We put a new man in Hancock's place who did not commend himself to the students. They raised a nasty row which made me much trouble, but they are sick and I triumphant now. It is on the whole rather fun to manage our crowd. When I think of all the rows I have been through I wonder that I am not a nervous wreck."

In some respects the liberal policy of discipline calls for higher qualities in its administrators than the system of obedience to authority. It was Cavour, I believe, who said with some scorn that anybody could govern under martial law but that it took a real statesman to govern successfully under a system of liberty and representation. Isaac Sharpless had the statesman-like qualities necessary for the liberal college

community. Possibly if he had wished, he could have achieved order under the old system, but he had no faith that it was really wholesome. He recognized that there were times when self-government showed its imperfections. "Yet I am sure," he said, "that the man who means to direct the agencies of a school by sheer will and authority will break down ultimately, and what is more to the point, will not produce the best results in the development of character. It is better at the occasional expense of decorum to have a responsible, self-controlling, sympathetic body of students than the rigid discipline of present obedience."¹⁷

On the scholastic side questions of another order were thrust forward by the march of events. The classics versus science, general culture versus technical training, these were issues which arose at Haverford in the ten or fifteen years preceding 1887. In the older days there had been only one general course—the classical. No other had been practiced or thought of. But about 1876 a slight broadening of the curriculum took place and two members of the Class of 1878 graduated in a scientific course differing from the classical in the omission of Greek and the substitution in its place of scientific subjects and modern languages. A course in engineering, in-

troduced a few years later, seemed a step further in the direction of yielding to the pressure of those who wished to see more courses of practical usefulness. Conservative forces at Haverford and the tradition of the past checked any tendency, if such there were, to swing far in this direction, but by the time Isaac Sharpless became president the trend in general education toward industrial and technical schools had assumed considerable proportions.

Isaac Sharpless himself had not had a classical education. At Westtown the course had been strong in mathematics, weak in the ancient languages and general literature. His one year at Harvard had been devoted to technical studies for the express purpose of fitting himself for the profession of engineering. Yet somehow and from somewhere he had acquired a profound appreciation of the value of a broad, liberal education, and there was no doubt of his belief that Haverford should primarily adhere to this ideal rather than tend toward becoming a technical training school.

In an article written in 1884 under the title, *The Student of the Future*, he said: "A cultured and a broadened and deepened mind is an engine of immense power, a sure reliance in adversity, a heightener of every pleasure. It is something

worth working for in itself. Fame may come and money may come as auxiliaries. Who sets himself down to work for them may gain them but it will be at the expense of something better. It is such as he who have raised the mistaken cry for a practical education; who are taking the keen edge off our desire for learning and study for learning and discipline's sake."¹⁸

The liberal culture which he valued was not a matter of the frills of erudition or of mere wanderings through the alluring expanses of literature. "Before me," he wrote, "stands a row of school books with worn backs and dirty pages and many an ugly mark and spot. Yonder is another row with bright and beautiful bindings, of song and story, the gift to the world of the greatest masters of thought and expression. It is these latter that most will say bring the culture; and yet that row of battered school books has been worth more to me than all the poetry and history and biography in the world, highly as I value them. This training of the mental powers that one gets, and gets only by bending down to work, is worth more than all the poetry and music and French that were ever smeared over the undisciplined brains of the so-called person of culture."¹⁹

When his time came to direct the educational

policy of Haverford College this was the ideal which guided him. Two paragraphs from his inaugural address show what road he meant to take. After justifying the inclusion in Haverford's curriculum of the studies pertaining to the engineering course he added: "But there is, and we cannot press it too strongly, an object in education which is not utilitarian; a broadening of the mental powers which itself is an end and not a means; the growth of the man rather than of the money-making, society-loving personality; the creation of internal sources of influence which will promote all private concerns and make their possessor a centre of influence in church and state. We care not to educate only scholarly recluses, but we do want broad-minded men, who go into the world with no uncertain principles, and lead the moral and social and political movements of our present civilization, and a wholly practical education as commonly conceived will not make them.

"A Haverford degree must represent all this and stand for breadth of culture, scholarly spirit, disciplined powers, and such information as naturally comes from four years of collegiate work in somewhat varied fields."

Years of educational experience did not alter this faith. One could multiply quotations from

his writings or addresses in evidence of that fact. I will add only one which came from his pen some fifteen years later: "It is not so much the schools of technology and of professional training as the colleges of general learning that produce the great leaders of our nation to-day. They develop the two elements commonly known as discipline and culture, the one a power to do, the other a possession attained. He who has them both is likely to succeed in whatever direction he works. They come in their best estate as the result of no narrow, specialized course with a mercenary object continually in view, but rather as the result of a generous training in the broad field of higher learning which is the exclusive possession of no nation and no age."

Such was the general principle by which he charted Haverford's educational course. Yet the principle was always his servant, not he its slave. He was singularly free from the fault of allowing a good idea to ride him into the ditch of disproportion. He viewed his principle with breadth and applied it with balance. In the present case of his loyalty to general culture as the Haverford ideal his philosophy and practice were qualified in two respects. In the first place he was not so obsessed by devotion to a liberal education as not to recognize that technical training

had a legitimate place and filled a genuine need in America's educational system. But it was not Haverford's function to stress these technical studies. In the second place he felt that even Haverford, while maintaining general culture as the core of its policy, could with propriety and usefulness offer some courses which would give preparatory training and some elementary technical knowledge to those who wished to direct their education toward special professions.

Regarding the engineering course already introduced he said on assuming the presidency: "We would not attempt to turn out a finished engineer any more than we would a finished lawyer. But we may legitimately so direct the undergraduate work of a young man that the powers of his mind and body especially needed in his work may be so developed that he can readily grasp the more technical points of his future life."²⁰ This view rested, I think, upon several considerations. For one thing, he felt that popular demand could not be wholly ignored. For another, he held that the studies which would contribute toward general culture and mental discipline were not limited to those included in the old classical course; men differ in mind and aptitudes and some could gain more from scientific and practical studies than from

Greek. Finally he knew the importance of interest on the part of the student in obtaining results.

Under his guidance, not only was the engineering course retained, but studies which would be preparatory to the practice of medicine were included. He believed in gradually and conservatively expanding this policy with regard to other professions and callings.

In 1899 he had occasion to elucidate his views to some extent. At the annual alumni mid-winter dinner it was the custom to have an address from the president and in that year he spoke in part on the development of Haverford's modified elective system under which almost all of the freshman and sophomore work was prescribed and the greater part of the junior and senior studies was on an elective basis. He put forward the idea that at Haverford it might be well to follow in measure the example of Johns Hopkins in grouping students so that each group would represent a well-rounded course and allow election to be made among these groups. In discussing the subject he dealt with the inclusion of practical and vocational studies. His speech was followed by an address from an invited guest—a wealthy and prominent resident in Haverford's neighborhood—who suggested

that the A.B. degree might be dropped. An alumnus of the old school of thought, George G. Mercer, feeling that Haverford's ancient ideal of broad culture was being endangered, was aroused to write to President Sharpless. "The suggestion," ran his letter, "of the abolition of the degree of Bachelor of Arts, made last evening by an honored guest at the annual dinner of the Haverford Alumni Association, and your own intimation that courses preparatory to professional studies might well be substituted for the study of Plato and Aristotle, are to me startling as to demand attention from Haverford alumni, * * * *." In a second letter, after a reply to the first, he wrote: "I am not sure who it was—perhaps Carlyle—who said, 'Drop the "Times" and take up the eternities,' but it seems to me a good motto for a college," and he asked for a statement of the President's plan for study grouping, Isaac Sharpless's answer was in part as follows:

"Haverford College, Haverford, Pa.,
2d. mo., 6th, 1899.

"George G. Mercer,
Drexel Building, Philadelphia, Pa.
My Dear Friend:

"I am glad to have a chance to answer thy request of the 4th. though on the subject involved.

it would be easier to write a pamphlet than a letter.

"When thee was here there were forty-two students. The increase since that time has been coincident with, and consequent upon, paying some attention to 'The Times' rather than confining our efforts to 'The Eternities.' With it has come, not only increase in numbers, but also increase of scholarship, interest, high training. Had we maintained the classical, philosophical and mathematical course of thy day as an exclusive curriculum I question whether we would have forty-two students, for it is a college law that 'from him that hath not shall be taken away.'

* * * *

"Now the question I tried, with limited time and ability, to bring before the Alumni Association was this subject, a very important one as it seems to me of the proper basis on which elections should be made, and I predicated my conclusion on two propositions:

"First. My observations, carried over a number of years, indicate that students who have related subjects leading towards a definite object secure, not only more available knowledge, but more of the sort of mental power and high ideals

for which colleges exist than those who scatter their energies.

"Secondly. The psychological teaching that results achieved in mental development are very largely determined by *interest* in the work being done, and by making all ideas taken into the mind bear a definite relation to other ideas already there.

"These two propositions, which I cannot now argue—one the result of experience, the other of theory—have induced me to believe that some modification of the Johns Hopkins system will be best for us, and this does not involve any criticism of larger colleges whose conditions are very different.

"Yet when one comes to make out the groups he is confronted by serious difficulties which it is not necessary now to enumerate. It is better for a system to grow up meeting actual wants as they arise than to have it forced ready made upon an unwilling community. Such has been going on here in groups of studies, to a large extent student-made, in chemistry, mechanics, medicine, divinity, teaching, and other subjects. Earnest young men will nearly always have a motive and an aim, and will select courses leading in that way. They have their great reward in strengthened purpose and heightened

ideals. The careless students will try to develop along the line of least resistance, and they will gain their rewards in easier times and poorer education.

“Now I would like to lift as many students as possible from the second class into the first. I have seen it done in the ‘Course Preparatory to Medicine’ in several cases, and I know no better way to stimulate our average, or poorer-than-average student, to earnestness and intellectual fruitfulness than by pointing him to the rewards of labor gained by an intelligent and successful pursuit of his profession or trade. In view of the existence of business aspirations among our undergraduates I see no reason why the subjects *we already teach*, with a few additions to complete the course, should not be systematically arranged and encouragement given to follow them. The same may be said of any other livelihoods whenever they are taken by any considerable number.

“This is greatly removed from the work of a commercial school. It is strictly collegiate. It is in line with, not in violation of, strict educational principles. It is not a surrender to commercialism. Its purpose is to give the best training, and if, thereby, there is increased ability to make money, I would not consider that a

disadvantage. The great mistake made along thy line since the elective system was introduced has been a belief that there is no real scholarship and no great educational value to be derived from anything except the old-fashioned studies. For many individuals there is a better culture to be derived from history than from mathematics, from chemistry than from Greek. For others the reverse is true. No one has a right to point to a study which he felt inspired and developed him and to say that this is the great and indispensable food for every other mind; nor to talk about cheapness and lack of collegiate dignity as connected with any serious and inspiring subject.

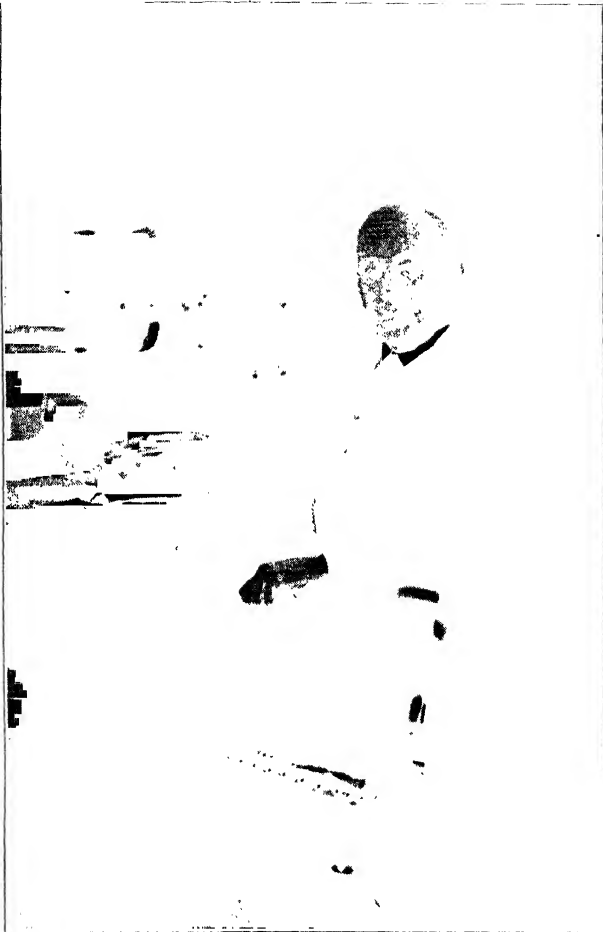
Very truly thy friend,
Isaac Sharpless."²¹

CHAPTER VII

A COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S TEMPTATION

A college, even if it be a small one, is a jealous mistress for a progressive and conscientious administrator, devoted to its best development. But Isaac Sharpless found time for some outside interests. He continued to write and now and then was called upon for addresses. During the first ten years after he became president his articles and speeches were mainly on education and Quaker subjects. He took part in the educational movement of the times, and in 1899 was president of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. About this date appeared his notable contribution to Pennsylvania and Quaker history in his book, "A Quaker Experiment," followed in 1900 by "Two Centuries of Pennsylvania History."

Of his life as president he has given us a glimpse in his description of a college president's day. Written impersonally it cannot, of course, be taken as a literal description of his own activi-



President Sharpless at his office desk in Roberts Hall

ties, but it seems fair to assume that it was penned out of his own experience. The passage is that which opens his article, *The Temptation of a College President*, in the *Educational Review*, September, 1910.

"The President was seated in his office, fatigued after a day devoted to the internal affairs of the college. He had tried to save a boy from a course of life which would be his undoing. He had braced up another, a good fellow, who was becoming careless. He had had a long conference with his superintendent of buildings as to the best and most economical heating system. He had settled a controversy as to a charge of unfair treatment made by a group of students against an unwise instructor. He had given a lecture to a class on his pet subject of Greek literature. He had answered four mails bringing inquiries from candidates for the freshman class with many intellectual and financial weaknesses about which advice was needed; from candidates for places on the faculty to fill vacancies existing or hoped for; from an uneasy professor of another college who inclosed a blank, which he said he had sent to five hundred others asking for information as to the best place to purchase frying-pans for the college refectory

and the number, shape, and size in millimeters of those most needed; from the best lecturer in America who would for ten dollars give his unrivaled effort on 'The psychology of the forward pass'; from a lady who desired his name as honorary vice-president of an association to supply anti-bacterial bacteria to the children of immigrants; and from a miscellaneous assortment of seekers of detailed advice on subjects uninteresting to himself or any one else but the writer.

"After it was all over, he had relaxed himself upon his chair and asked whether it was all worth while."²²

Of larger importance than the questions put to him by outside inquirers was the question which insistentlly thrust itself upon him in these days: Was he making good with the college? He had started out with the Emersonian philosophy "that if you make a really good and wholesome college, patronage and money will come in largely unsought. If you gather together a faculty as effective and as scholarly as your means will permit, and keep them down every day to their best work, with every encouragement possible in the way of favorable conditions, and ask them to take a human as well as an intellectual interest in every student, that somehow,

perhaps slowly, the information will filter to the little group of parents who still control the destinies of their boys and who wish a real education rather than a collection of social and athletic distractions."²³ Upon this theory he labored but when he looked out upon the fields from time to time during the first ten years the harvest did not appear. There was the sense of inadequate equipment, the desire for buildings, and during the early part of the time, the oppressive consciousness that five good friends of the college were fulfilling a generous pledge to contribute \$3000 apiece annually toward the college expenses. There was the sense that the number of students was smaller than desirable and the wish to see more bright young men knocking at the door, but he did not have occasion to open the door much oftener than before. Nor did the endowment greatly increase. Doubts and misgivings would, at times, assail him. Was he wrong in his faith that good work would bring its rewards? Or if it should ultimately be true, could Haverford afford to wait while other colleges attracted students and grew in numbers by the wiles of the advertiser, by direct bids for young men, and by athletics, successfully, if expensively, maintained? And with the doubt came the temptation. Would it not be better, after all,

to go the same way that he saw many another institution going, to economize on the faculty, to wink at loose morals, to build up winning athletic teams, to establish easy entrance requirements and to adopt the standard illustrated by Mr. Dooley's college president, "who takes the boy into his Turkish room, offers him a cigarette, and says, 'Now, my dear boy, you are admitted. What brand of larnin' do ye wish studied for ye by me competent professors?' "

Looking back on this period after his thirty years of presidential service had come to a close and referring to his faith in the achievement of success through quietly building up a good college, he wrote: "It may now be confessed that I was often tempted to think that this policy was futile. It took much longer than I had conceived possible for results to appear. A decade of trial did not seem to have much appreciable effect on the size of the list of patrons or the tendency to contribute to college resources. The temptation was great to yield ideals to more superficial and immediate results and employ advertising methods in the way of extravagant announcements, field-agents and athletics with the hope that merit might follow rather than precede numerical growth. But fortunately for

the theory, I retained the presidency for three decades and in this time it proved trustworthy."²⁴

The temptation never successfully assailed him. In spite of disappointment he pursued his policy of loyalty to the excellent. In 1898 admission by certificate was abolished and thereafter Haverford took its place among the very few institutions which required entrance examinations for all applicants. In 1904 admission requirements were again raised. By this time the tide had begun to turn. Money for buildings and endowments flowed in. Professors' salaries could be, and were, increased. Students gradually came in larger numbers. There were signs that his philosophy and his policy were coming out on top. At the end of twenty-five years he could write of his theory, perhaps not as a principle of universal application, but as a practicable and reasonable policy: "To build up an institution worthy of support with certain distinguishing features which commend themselves to solid men of means is often the surest road to financial aid. To create a scholarly atmosphere, a high standard of morals, a modest, useful body of graduates, will in time secure the approbation of the public and oftentimes its pecuniary contribu-

tions. Endowments for colleges, like happiness for individuals, come oftenest as by-products. The man may best succeed who stays most at home and directs his energies to the solution of internal problems."²⁵

CHAPTER VIII

COLLEGE AND CHARACTER

“Our intimate manner of living, the smallness of the numbers with which we have to deal, our possession of the dormitory and boarding system, the character of our professors, the character of our students, and the traditions of the place, make it easy, under wise management, to develop a strong Haverford feeling, which will encourage such a moral and intellectual tone about the College as we all wish to secure ****.

“In extending the objects of our College so as to include not merely intellectual development, but also the development of character and morals, we know we assume a responsibility which should not be taken up lightly. It would be easier far to say that we give so many courses of study, and end our duties, for then we would be held to no accountability in public estimation for the lapses which will occur under any system. But as we hold that character is more important than intellect, so we cannot believe that it is right that young men in their formative age

should be carefully trained in mind and wholly untrained in morals."

So spoke the young President to his friends on his formal induction into office. The words were his earliest official pronouncement on what was always to him the deepest and most fundamental purpose of the college. As he watched the procession of students marching in through the college gates, marching through the four years under the college influence, and marching out each Commencement into the world of manhood activities, the thought which lay nearest his heart was not merely of making the scholar but of making the man. His great desire for the college was that it should not simply help its students to become men of success for themselves, but that it should develop, as he once said; "that product most needed in America, the public-spirited scholar, the broad-minded and welcome leader of a democracy."²⁶

In his mind the purpose of Haverford College and of the colleges of America was to furnish a liberal education and he thought of a liberal education in the terms of Huxley's definition: "That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechan-

ism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with the great and fundamental truths of nature and the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself."

After nearly thirty-five years of college experience and more than twenty years in the office of president, Isaac Sharpless described, in words not dissimilar to Huxley's, the type of character which he felt Quaker institutions like Haverford College should aim to produce. "What, then, have our students a right to expect to receive from our schools? A decent amount of knowledge such as men of education are expected to have to enjoy and understand each other intellectually; a mind trained to work so that it can take up any ordinary problem of life and solve it; habits, both mental and moral, well grounded in principle, which will stand the stress of worldly temptation; the manners which bespeak the self-poised,

self-controlled man of affairs and of courtesy, in business and society; a healthy optimism which makes always a cheerful and energetic worker in whatever field he places himself; a Christian devotion to some good cause for which he will make sacrifices of time and resources; and in addition, if he be a Friend, a clear knowledge of the place and purposes of our religious Society, and a zeal for its furtherance and adaptation to present needs. These, in varying measures, our schools should do for the youth who seek their portals.”²⁷

Toward this end the various influences of the college should contribute. Its general life, its customs and traditions should be permeated with the ozone of this ideal so that those who breathe its atmosphere should unconsciously drink in its influence. The curriculum should give large place to those studies which have most to offer toward this objective. There should be courses devoted to the study of Biblical subjects and of Christian literature, but freedom to every student to think for himself in the realm of religious faith and doctrine.

The one great influence above all others upon which he relied was the faculty. “A faculty of high repute and character is the only thing which can save a small college,” he said in his

report to the Board of Managers in 1899. In explaining to the Carnegie Foundation the reasons for the high cost of teachers at Haverford he stated that "We want men of human interests and character as well as scholarship, and the choice is limited"; and this standard for professors meant to him "A combination of scholarship with strength of character, forceful influence, sympathetic interest in all sides of student life, skill in seeing and meeting student views, the manners of a gentleman and to some extent of a man of the world * * * *." 28

The ideals of life for which Haverford should stand and the methods by which those ideals should be promoted among the students could not be considered without reference to the denominational character of the College. The founders of Haverford had established it as a Quaker institution for members of the Society of Friends. "Whereas," ran the Committee's advance announcement, "the members of the Society of Friends have hitherto labored under very great disadvantages in obtaining for their children a guarded education in the higher branches of learning combining the requisite literary instruction with a religious care over the morals and manners of the scholars, enforcing plainness and simplicity of dress and deportment, training

up the children in a knowledge of the testimonies of our Religious Society and carefully preserving them from the influence of corrupt principles and evil communications:

“It is therefore proposed that an institution be established in which the children of Friends shall receive a liberal education in ancient and modern literature and the mathematical and natural sciences, under the care of competent instructors of our own Society, so as not to endanger their religious principles or alienate them from their early attachments.”

For many years there were no special difficulties in the way of pursuing this objective and the Haverford authorities could steer a straight course toward it along a direct and, perhaps, somewhat narrow road. In those early days students and professors were practically all members of the Society of Friends. The opening of the College to those not members of the Society did not result for many years in any large numbers of “non-Friend” students, and as late as about 1875 approximately ninety-five per cent were members. During the next ten or twelve years a change began to take place. Students who were not Friends began to come in larger numbers and in the autumn of 1888 we find an item in “The Student,” regarding the opening of

the College, which states: "About one-third of the students are Friends, and many of the others are closely connected."

The faculty in 1888, although Friends constituted a majority, was no longer exclusively composed of members of the Society. As we shall see from remarks of Isaac Sharpless quoted below there had been a number of vacancies to fill in a comparatively short time and it had not been easy to find properly qualified Friends to fill all the positions.

In 1878 a change in the charter of the corporation of the college was made to insure that its control and management should remain in the hands of Friends. The corporation, which had been a stock company, with transferable shares, was now made a non-stock corporation, of which all former owners of shares were members but with a provision in the by-laws that all new members should be Friends. In 1905-1906 an occasion arose to re-consider this provision. At this time the Carnegie Foundation announced its pension plan open to colleges such as Haverford on certain conditions, one of which was that the institution should be undenominational. Isaac Sharpless had been recommending for some time the establishment of a pension plan for Haverford professors. Without a pension plan and ex-

cluded from the Carnegie Foundation's system the College would be at a disadvantage. It could qualify under the Foundation's offer by changing the by-law in question. The matter came before the Board, but the President, T. Wistar Brown, did not approve—to quote Isaac Sharpless's account of the matter—"of allowing a New York corporation to have any hold on the policy of Haverford, and thought that we had better have our own pension fund. He afterwards was the largest contributor. This view prevailed * * * *."

In dealing with the problem of maintaining Haverford as a Quaker college President Sharpless faced conditions less simple than those of his predecessors. There were now two groups of students large enough to be entitled to consideration, the Friends and the non-Friends. From time to time he spoke publicly on the question. In his report to the Board of Managers in 1890, after stating that the College must retain its religious basis, he continued: "It is possible to have a college very useful, and very fair externally, which is wholly secular. I do not think Haverford should ever be allowed to become, by purpose or by drift, such a college.

"In realizing this pervasive religious influence, we are but slightly, if at all, hampered by the simple forms of the Society of Friends, which

lend themselves readily to the attempt to make religion spiritual rather than denominational. Nevertheless, we have a double problem to solve. In the first place, we should strengthen the loyalty and usefulness to our Church of its own members who come under our influence, impressing them with its spirit and beliefs. In the second place, while not undermining the convictions which attach others to other Churches, we must assist and deepen their spiritual growth and their interest in the knowledge of Christianity."

Two years later he again addressed the Board on the subject. Speaking first of the substitution of a more liberal policy in place of the old strict discipline and of the good results, he then continued: "But this evident fact seems to have led some people to think that any denominationalism is a mistake. In so far as denominationalism means an attempt to convert others to Quakerism I heartily agree. I do not feel Haverford has any mission to do this. But I apprehend it would take the heart out of many friends of our College if it were to be decided that Haverford has no mission to develop the principles of the Society of Friends, to show to our own members their value and adaptation and to strengthen in them an aggressive loyalty and attachment. I have no desire to exalt sectarian feeling at the

expense of general Christianity, indeed I believe that intelligent instruction in the spirit of Quakerism will go far to destroy sectarianism."

He felt the faculty to be the key to the situation. An occasion for the presentation of his experience and his views arose at a meeting of the Educational Association of Friends in America held at Haverford in 1888. The religious and Quaker character of Bryn Mawr College was under discussion and President Sharpless contributed the following remarks:

"I think that probably the difficulty of securing thoroughly competent teachers in the Society of Friends for all the different chairs in a college or in a school, is not understood in some quarters as it might be. The degree of Ph.D. is certainly not sufficient to make a teacher, as we had fully discussed last evening. There are a great many qualifications which are absolutely necessary in order to give first-rate instruction of the highest grades in college. The development of the elective system, which seems to be the education the present time demands, requires that there should be a competent specialist, and in some cases more than one, in each important branch of learning.

"In looking over the Society of Friends from the standpoint of my position at Haverford, with

an earnest desire to secure professors at the head of each department who were Friends, I found it very difficult to lay my hands on just the right men in all respects. There are some of the departments which it is more easy to fill than others. I do not know today where to find, in the Society of Friends, a competent biologist to take charge of the department of biology in case there were a vacancy in Haverford College; and there are other positions of which the same thing might be said.

“Nevertheless, I believe that no college, no school which is doing its duty to the Society of Friends, can be officered to a very large extent by any other than members of the Society of Friends. Therefore it became a very serious problem to know what should be done in this matter, because it so happened that two or three years ago almost all the old officers of Haverford College passed out of her life from one cause or other. The College had to be re-officered practically. There are not more than four members on the staff of Haverford College now that have been on it more than three or four years, and therefore there was a great demand for members of the Society of Friends who were competent to fill these different positions. The problem came on us at Haverford somewhat suddenly.

We did not want to go outside of the Society of Friends for our officers; on the other hand, we did not believe that the Society of Friends would be benefited by putting incompetent men in positions as professors. We thought it would be a great deal better to have a sympathetic man who was a Christian than to have an incompetent man who was a Friend.

"I do not know that there is any other solution than that which President Trueblood has hinted at—that we should take promising young men, men who have proved their ability to teach, and promise them positions, one, two or three years in advance, on condition that they will qualify themselves for them and if they are unable financially, that we should supply the necessary funds. That has been the basis on which Haverford has aimed to act, and the result of it has been that out of the eleven officers of Haverford College who are regular permanent officers of the College, and who are on the grounds every day, we have been able to secure eight who are members of the Society of Friends. And I do not believe that those eight members of the Society of Friends that we have here will rank below the corresponding members of faculties in other colleges around us. I think that that, and that alone, is the solution of the difficulty."²⁹

Four years later his report to the Board (1892) discussed the policy which he felt should be pursued regarding the faculty. Haverford should, he said, be an influence for strengthening the Quakerism of students who were Friends, but without sectarianism. "How," he continued, "can this be done, and what substitutes can we apply for the discarded restrictions of the past? There is but one that I know of, and that is *influence*, and that influence must be exerted by the Faculty.

"Here I make haste to say that I do not think at all that all members of the Faculty should be members of the Society of Friends. I should consider this rather undesirable. It would tend to produce clannishness and narrowness. But the prevailing and positive influence should be Friendly and *all* professors should be selected with reference to their attitudes to this great question. There are plenty of Christian men who will satisfy these conditions, and in time I believe that there is no doubt that a Faculty could be got together, the majority of whom would be Quaker scholars, the best to be had in the world, all of whom would be sympathetic and all would satisfy every reasonable demand of scholarship, skill and forceful influence.

"The examples of Bryn Mawr College, and

the William Penn Charter School, have often been held up to me as models for our emulation. I believe I fully appreciate the ability which has made so successful these valuable institutions. Their aim has been to select the most brilliant scholars and skillful teachers to be had for the money expended. I do not in the least criticize their course, but I do not feel that we should follow their example, unless we qualify it with the additional condition that these men of scholarship must also possess the qualifications which will enable them to work sympathetically with the Haverford idea, and this condition, like every other, will narrow the field, throw out some candidates, often otherwise brilliantly qualified, and make the employment of a Faculty more costly."

These expressions in the early years of his administration may be supplemented by another nearer to its close. In 1909, speaking more generally regarding Quaker education we find him expressing substantially the same views: "And finally, the Friends' schools must be kept Friendly in the technical sense. This does not mean that every act and belief of the student must be scrutinized and adjusted, or that members of other Christian denominations must be induced into the Friendly fold. The schools were fortunately not founded for this latter purpose

and they have no such mission. It does mean, however, that every one of our young members should be a better Friend as the result of attendance, that he should have more loyalty to our church, more consecration to its development in the world, be more intelligently a believer in its principles, more alert to adapt it to its best work. This, too, means loyal, consecrated, intelligent teachers in things pertaining to Quakerism and a great field is open here, to satisfy the best ambitions of the best of our youth.”³⁰

What is probably his last public expression on this subject is contained in the chapter on Haverford ideals in his book, *The Story of a Small College*, published in 1918. It outlines in general the same attitude as already indicated, though perhaps in somewhat less definite terms.

CHAPTER IX

"Who teaches me for a day is my father for a life-time." Chinese Proverb.

An account of Isaac Sharpless's character and influence in relation to the college students cannot, perhaps, be better begun than with a quotation from his description of the ideal college president in his little book on *The American College*—a description which, although not meant by him to be a portrait of himself, largely fills that role:

"The ideal President will be to the student a paternal adviser and a strict disciplinarian. He will seek and possess their confidence and will win their support for the important measures relating to the welfare of the college. He will quietly and persistently preach his doctrines, till some day he will probably see, perhaps rather suddenly, public opinion change and accept his views * * * *. He will seek to guide rather than force this opinion and will carry it along with him by gentle steps and frank presentations of practical conditions. He will seldom be

dogmatic or arbitrary. He may sometimes, until he gets well established, have to take a firm stand in opposition to a temporary false sentiment or a bad custom. But he will do this in such a way that returning reason will justify his policy, and he will be stronger and more respected for his firmness. He will be shrewd enough to meet and often defeat an objectionable student enterprise, and discover offenders not by spying or through detective agencies but by open knowledge of student character, collective or individual * * * *. If he has to face immoral conditions which are playing havoc in his college, he will strive first to remedy them by influence and reason, and will not hesitate to enlist the moral elements in the college to his support * * * *. But when he finds that there are some who are permanently vicious and irreclaimable, he will not hesitate to insist on their withdrawal, nor can appeals from associates or family move him from this position. His final attitude will be more of sorrow than of anger or triumph, and there will be no bravado or public announcements of future penalties, for college students cannot be frightened into good morality.

* * * *

“He will know how to talk to his college as a

whole, not too frequently, for much talking is a weariness to hearers and a weakness to himself, but wisely, tactfully, and if he has it in him, humorously and interestingly * * * *. His character will shine through it all, and he will not need to preach to have his influence.

“But sometimes he will preach. When his heart fills with a desire for the good of the lives for which he has assumed a responsibility and words come often unbidden as he faces them as a group of his friends, he will give them the results of his best thoughts and feelings in a way which will convince them that he is not primarily a taskmaster or disciplinarian, but a man who is giving his life for a cause, and not only for an abstract cause, but for them as individuals; that he has a message for them which he must deliver, and that he feels that the very future of one or more of them lies in the proper use of that hour. When he thus feels he will preach, and his sermon will not be forgotten by some of them.”⁸¹

A sympathetic understanding of young people is one requisite for success in such a position as his. He possessed a large measure of this quality. He knew that college professors, even college presidents, are seldom endowed with halos in the eyes of their students, and he could tell appre-

ciatively the story of the students who complained to the college president about the college cook. The president took the matter up with the cook and the cook said: "I would not pay much attention to their complaints. They talk the same way to me about your lectures." While he knew only too well how disorder and lack of discipline could disrupt college life he had insight into the heart of the boy and knew the hidden forces at work there. No one, I think, can read his accounts of school and college pranks without feeling that he entered into the humor and understood the spirit of many of these situations. Perhaps memory kept before him his own boyish feelings. Perhaps he sympathized with Cruikshank's deliverance that "men are frequently like tea; their real strength and goodness are not drawn out till they have been for a short time in hot water."

The secret of his influence lay, it may be, even more in his faith in the good qualities and the capacities of youth. It was Huxley, I believe, who said that the greatest blow which any organism could receive is a sense of its own uselessness. There are people who sometimes give us, especially when we are young, this feeling of futility. Isaac Sharpless was not one of these. He had faith, and let his students know that he

had faith, in their possibilities. He was not blind to deficiencies; he knew that there are almost sure to be some failures in any considerable group. But faults did not loom so large in his vision as to shut out virtues.

While he was still a professor at Haverford he expressed something of this faith in some articles published in *The Student* under the title *What Young People Have Done*. Galileo, discovering before he was twenty that all vibrations of the pendulum are made in the same time; Newton, inventing the binomial theorem at twenty-two, were among the instances he used to illustrate his thesis that young people can often do worthwhile things as well as prepare for them. Of his ideal president he said at a much later date: "His usual attitude will be rather as a wise leader of student opinion into right paths than as opponent of evil or inflictor of penalties. He will see dangers as they come * * * *. But he will always have more faith in building up the good than in attacking the evil."³²

A member of the Haverford faculty whose long career as professor covered a large part of Isaac Sharpless's presidency spoke of this characteristic in the following words: "An old politician once gave to a young politician a pithy piece of advice. 'As for principles,' he said, 'see which

way the crowd is moving and put yourself at the head of it. As for conduct, say the best of everybody and to everybody and think the worst.' Now the main secret of the success of President Sharpless, in his thirty years of administration of Haverford College, lies, in my mind, in the fact that he has followed precisely the opposite course to that recommended by the astute politician. He has thought the best of everybody and a thousand students have felt the spur of this confidence; but he has invariably given them a round, unvarnished tale of their deficiencies and faults.

"In brief, his absolute honesty and his invincible optimism, working without lapse or exaggeration upon the student body, have been the main factors in bringing the College to its present state of grace."

To the discipline of the unruly he brought a rare combination of qualities. His shrewdness was at once the students' despair and delight; his firmness a rock which they could neither remove nor circumvent. His justice was one of the chief sources of his strength, and the students came to feel that he had something of the quality of the old-world ruler, who was "the irreconcilable enemy and perpetual conqueror, not of any man or nation, but of injustice."

His methods of dealing with disciplinary cases varied, of course, according to the occasion. He had an art of dry humor quite his own and proved by his use of it that humor and discipline need not necessarily be strangers. On one occasion, when a task of writing essays had been assigned, a lad whose indolence, perhaps, exceeded his originality, found what he considered a satisfactory article in an issue of *Forest and Stream*, copied it, and submitted it as his essay. Possibly all would have gone well from the boy's point of view had not the same labor-saving idea come to birth in the mind of a comrade, who, unfortunately for both, hit upon the same article in the magazine. Isaac Sharpless was not long in analyzing the situation. P——, one of the boys, was summoned. "Well, P——," said he, "I see thee is writing for *Forest and Stream*." This was all, but it was enough to get beneath the skin, and a feeling of shame-faced smallness crept over the culprit. One day, years afterward, when the boy was a man, Isaac Sharpless happened to enter the restaurant where he was eating lunch. One can imagine it was with a quiet, quizzical smile and not with unkindness that he put the question as he joined his former pupil: "Well, P——, is thee still writing for *Forest and Stream*?"

On other occasions he could use his humor effectively in reading a public lesson to the offender. When some of the students took the donkey to the third floor of Barclay Hall and there fell from the President next morning in college assembly the remark: "If Senior H—— and Junior B—— want to enjoy the society of their friends let them do it in the fields"; or when some of the students in earlier days came to grief and injury in a sledding accident on Gray's Lane, whither they had gone contrary to rules, and that night the assembled college heard him read from the Bible the verse: "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?"; there was on such occasions the use of humor in a way that had no venom in it but which successfully turned the laugh upon the culprits and probably dampened their enthusiasm for similar escapades.

In private he might deal with the individual boy in a different way to touch the hidden springs of his better nature. A graduate has described his own experience; how the President caught him in the act of violating a rule and injuring property after other previous offenses; how he was summoned to the President's office;

with what fear and trembling he approached that interview; how when he was actually there the President became, not the stern disciplinarian, but the friend who confided in him, who talked to him of his (the President's) work for the College, of his failures and mistakes, of his ambitions and hopes; "And when I came away, I was filled with a vague, strange, newborn desire to help the President, with a kind of a feeling that I was a part of the college, that it would be a success or a failure, just as those of us who attended the college made it successful or a failure."

In vain would be the attempt to measure in definite terms the influence of Isaac Sharpless on the students who passed through the college under his regime. But there sometimes come occasions in a man's life when he is given to see something of the place he holds in the circle of his friends and associates. Such an occasion came to Isaac Sharpless at the dinner when the alumni celebrated his completion of twenty-five years as president of the College. When he had been introduced to the assembled graduates, when the tumultuous cheering burst forth from every throat and would not cease for ten riotous minutes, when the books of Colonial history and the six fishing rods and tackle had been pre-

sented as memorial gifts from the alumni, when speeches had been made and verses read and songs sung in his honor, Isaac Sharpless knew that the struggle and the labor had not been in vain, knew that to these men he was not simply the president of their college but that they held him in their minds and hearts as a friend. And who shall measure the imponderable influence of a friend?

CHAPTER X

BEYOND COLLEGE WALLS

Scholars and educators have sometimes been thought of as learned recluses spending their lives in the pursuit of abstract ideas behind institutional walls. Perhaps there have been times in the world's history when this reputation has been largely deserved. It can scarcely be said to hold good to-day and certainly Isaac Sharpless was not to be numbered among those to whom it could appropriately be applied. He was not only an interested student and an alert observer of the world's affairs but an active worker for the welfare of the community.

Reference has already been made to his studies in the political history of Pennsylvania and to his two books on the subject published in 1899 and 1900. These were followed in 1911 by *The Quakers in Pennsylvania* which appeared as Book V in Rufus M. Jones's *The Quakers in the American Colonies*. In addition he contributed from time to time articles on historical events and current political questions in Pennsylvania,

and in 1906 and 1907 we find him being called upon for addresses on several occasions by various societies interested in history. His qualities as an historian have been described as "insight into human motives, sympathetic yet unbiased interpretation of Quaker policies, scientific care in the weighing of evidence and a corresponding moderation in the statement of conclusions."

His work in this field naturally brought him into prominence in historical circles. I shall refer later to his activity in the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia. In 1909 he was made president of the Pennsylvania History Club and in the following year was appointed a Councillor of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and a member of the Committee of Seven Advisers to the Works of William Penn. English Friends drafted him for service as vice-president and president of their Historical Society in 1914 and 1915.

His mind did not live, however, primarily in the past. He was a thorough-going believer in the value of historical perspective, but he was keenly alive to the events of his own time. "Tell me important things that happen in politics, education and society," he wrote to his wife while travelling abroad in 1887. His own letters teemed with interesting comment on what he saw

and heard. In England he was impressed with the fact that so many of the educated men whom he met, including Friends, were Unionists. "Gladstone," he wrote, "seems to be a tremendous stumbling block to the people whom I meet, but they don't seem to know what to do about it. I suppose Bevan Braithwaite expressed the general feeling when he said the only hope he could see was that 'Gladstone might be removed.'" Again, later—"I am more than ever convinced that Gladstone is right in theory and wrong in some details, and these educated fellows will either have to see it or settle down into the usual belief of malcontents, that everything is going to the dogs."

When in England again in 1906 in search of a mathematics professor his comment was: "I have seen the country more and better than ever before and have talked to a lot of Englishmen—Friends and others. In many respects it is a better country than ours. The faults of twenty years ago, the conceit and insularity are much less manifest. But there is more going on in America, more work doing and to be done and I am quite satisfied with my nationality." In 1913 he made a trip to Japan by way of Europe and wrote a number of letters on public affairs

which appeared in the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

One might be an historian and an observer of life yet hold himself apart on a pinnacle of aloofness from which he passively watches the activities of the world about him. No such attitude found a place in Isaac Sharpless's philosophy. By word and example he preached a gospel of active and generous participation in the causes which make for a better community. He did not consider a college president excused from this service. "Our ideal President," he wrote, "will be active and intelligent in the reform work of his neighborhood."

The nobility and usefulness of taking one's part in various causes for the betterment of the world was an ideal which he held up to the college students. When he delivered the address to the graduating class at Haverford College in 1880 he urged that, whatever each one's calling in life might be, "there are duties outside of it, not only to yourself but to others—social duties, philanthropic duties, duties to the church, duties to the State.

* * * *

"It is easy to write enthusiastically of reforms, and easy to adopt abstract principles. But so strongly does it feel to me that the great need

of the world (wherever I have seen it), is prudent and practical and determined reformers, that I am willing to risk some charge of sophomore oratory to say it."

Some four years later, when Matthew Arnold was lecturing in America, Isaac Sharpless took issue with the great Englishman's philosophy in the following words (I assume that the editorial containing them came from his pen) : "The celebrated author of *Culture and Anarchy*, who is now lecturing among us, advises us in the treatment of these moral evils 'to allow our consciousness to play freely around' the questions, and to depend more on 'culture' and 'Hellenism,' 'sweetness and light.' All of which means, as we gather it, that it is advisable for us not to mix up ourselves too freely with the strife of reform, spending our time in attacking particular evils, but to stand aside out of the conflict, and calmly think on the questions from all sides, nurturing in ourselves fair and reasonable views. His philosophy does not seem to us to be entirely practical, but we know that many hurtful things are done by injudicious reformers, and we would be glad of more of this 'culture.' And yet culture is a fashionable excuse for inaction, and while Matthew Arnold will not have many professed votaries among the readers of *The Student*, there are

some who, for love of quietness and fear of loss to themselves, will not take the definite action with regard to reforms in State, education, society and moral questions which they ought. A background of calm, unprejudiced thought, of settled conviction, is most essential, but all kinds of men are needed, and when the evil becomes definite and the remedy also definite, action is also needed—‘fire and strength,’ as well as ‘sweetness and light.’ ”³³

About the same time, in another article, vigorous words came from his pen with a ringing message of “Forward”: “It may be true that the world is bright and beautiful, but it is also true that it is full of imperfections, and it is perfectly evident that most people, through prejudice and timidity obstruct the way to remove these imperfections; it is perfectly evident that in this day the great duty of earnest men is to throw themselves into the ranks of the radical reformers to preach the gospel of progress; to get up such a wholesome excitement that prejudices will be rudely handled and all unreasonableness rooted out. ‘Beware, when God lets loose a thinker on this planet, then all things are at risk,’ says some one * * * *. There is no fear of making the progressive party too strong. . We sometimes hear it said that conservatives are

necessary as ballast. It is a *false* idea. It implies that a progressive man is necessarily injudicious; that because he wants things better and is always willing to change he will allow himself to be run off by enthusiasm into dangerous schemes. There are, of course, visionary people, and old-fashioned men are fond of saying, 'See what stuff your radicals are made of.' But if a real reformer tears to pieces we find that

'It is but the ruin of the bad;
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whatever of good the old time had
Is living still.' ”³⁴

This sense of the importance of participating in community and public affairs for their improvement was not merely an evanescent feeling of his younger and more ardent years. It remained with him and found expression throughout his life. In 1899 when it was his place to deliver an address as President of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, he chose as his subject, *The Public Life of College Men*, and he was happy when Haverford graduates took leading parts in public affairs.

His varied activities in his own community bore witness that this was not a faith held but

unpracticed. At the first political meeting which he addressed, in Chester, in the early nineties, he told his audience that since he had been president of Haverford College he had made up his mind to decline no invitation to speak which carried with it an opportunity for service. Upon one occasion when he had returned home tired, there came to him suddenly a message from his sister stating that at the last minute the speaker who had been expected to address a meeting could not come. It was not the easiest or pleasantest task to step in at the eleventh hour and take the place of a popular speaker of national fame, but it was too late to cancel the meeting, and, tired as he was, he started immediately to perform the service.

In 1885 some of the residents of Haverford felt the need of a school in the neighborhood for their boys, and through A. J. Cassatt, proposed that they should furnish the building on the Haverford College grounds if the College would assume the management of the school. The accomplishment of the plan resulted in Isaac Sharpless becoming headmaster of the school at its start, though he soon turned it over to another. Under the auspices of the Haverford Meeting Association—before the Friends there had established a Monthly Meeting of their own

—a reading room was provided in the neighboring settlement of Preston. In this enterprise for the little community Isaac Sharpless was the leading spirit and main support. With great regularity on First-day evenings he and other members of the family would forsake the comfort of their own fireside to attend the exercises at the Preston reading room. The Main Line Citizens' Association, an organization for community improvement, chose him to be its president for a time, and when the number of taverns and speak-easies aroused some of the citizens to action he was a member of the Committee which undertook to close them.

In politics he took an active interest. His first appearance as a political speaker was made about 1890 or not long thereafter at a meeting of twenty-five hundred persons in the town of Chester. Thereafter he spoke frequently, and in 1906 was himself a candidate for the State legislature in opposition to the regular Republican nominee. Unfortunately for the State and the community he was defeated but as he subsequently said, "The experience, for that was all I got out of it, was valuable * * * *."

His position in American national politics is indicated in one or two letters written in 1911 and 1912 to his daughter in Japan. In October,

1911, he wrote: "We are in the midst of a 'progressive' revolution, such as existed in the time of Jefferson, and like that, partly wise and partly foolish. It demands government, executive, legislative and judicial, by the people directly, rather than by representatives, through the *initiative*, *referendum* and *recall*. Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson seem to be its great apostles, and its excuse is the abuse of political bosses and machines. Taft stands for moderate 'progress' within the law and is opposed especially to the (recall?) as applied to the judiciary. It looks now as if the next contest would be between Taft and Wilson and I suppose Wilson will be elected. As between Taft and any one else I am for Taft. He seems to me a great statesman, and not at all a politician, which is his weakness. Wilson has developed great political skill.

* * * *

"So goes the progress of the U. S. Lots of evil, foolishness and selfishness, plenty of good if it could be organized and got to work to prevail nearly always. In the long run we are progressing. Locally and temporarily it is discouraging. If one was not in it but could look on it as an outside philosopher only it would be inter-

esting. A free government under normal conditions will always improve.

"But the thing is for thee and me to do our duty, get things a little better around us, and then we are in line with the forces of good and something of the Divine current, without which all progress is hopeless, will flow through us."

"Pocono, Pa., 7. 7. 1912.

"Dear E———

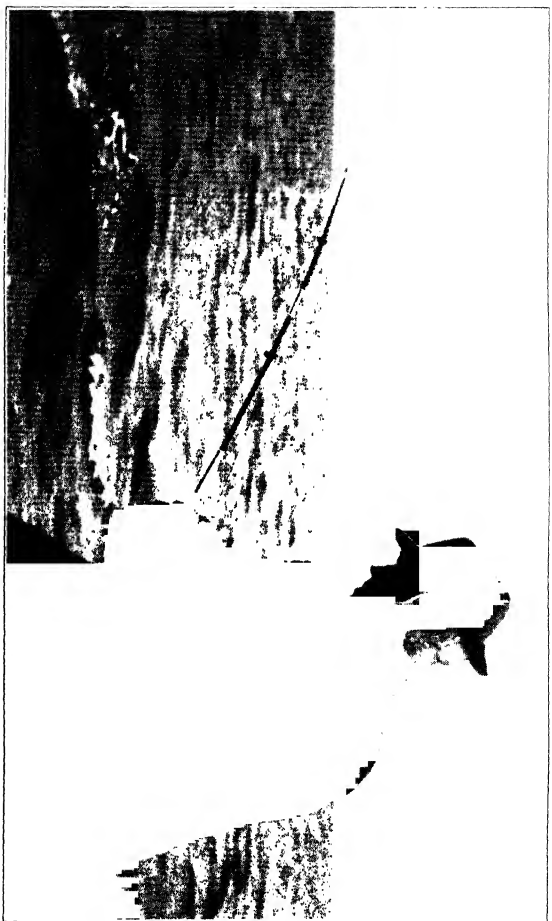
The conventions are over and Taft and Wilson are nominated. I suppose that in strict morality Teddy had a right to the Republican choice, as I suppose he also, as against Taft, was the selection of the Republican voters. But Taft had the machine and according to the rules of the game he won. Teddy made a really wonderful campaign. He is in my opinion a blustering demagogue, but he 'fools most of the people part of the time.' He stood for several good things of which I heartily approve, opposition to bosses, direct elections, opposition to judicial abuses and so on. It is more Roosevelt than Rooseveltism to which his opponents object. His whole attitude at Chicago was an autocratic one. There could have been a 'progressive' candidate nominated, if it had been other than himself, but he would not allow it.

“Taft is a poor politician, and has allowed himself almost unconsciously to fall into the hands of the old Bosses, and the great opposition to him has been, at least in Pennsylvania and some other states, because his election is supposed to (?) the strengthening of Penrose and his sort, though R. has worked with ——— and ——— who are equally objectionable. But somehow R. has the ability to create a great smoke which obscures the real issues and makes people talk about the ‘recall of judicial decision’ and other matters of rather minor consequence.

“Then the Democrats did an unexpectedly sensible thing in nominating Wilson at Baltimore. This will largely aid in defeating Roosevelt. All Democratic progressives will vote for him and the third party which R. promises will be deprived of support from that side. At present it looks as if W. would be elected. The issue will be partly on the Tariff, and Wilson stands for ‘Tariff for Revenue,’ while T. and R. both represent protection. It is impossible to prophesy the developments of the coming four months, the bitterness against Taft, which now exists will possibly subside, but now all the north-west would go solidly against him. He would get New England, New York, and possibly Pennsylvania, and some middle-west states.

"He has really been a good President, and when we have a fair summing up of his record there is much to say for him. The arbitration treaties were probably defeated by R. to discredit T. Reciprocity was all right but Canada defeated it. Recently he has taken sensible ground on the Tariff and Conservation. But he is a poor politician, is not personally popular, and has made serious tactical errors. So we are all at sea as to results. * * * * * Never was the Yearly Meeting so divided in my memory, though graciously so."

For rest and refreshment from his activities one form of recreation allured him above all others. Referring once to a veteran camper and lover of the woods, who happened also to be his lifelong friend, he said: "The rest of us have learned first to endure, then pity, then embrace the philosophy and habits of this pioneer." To get away into the woods, to live close to nature, to hear her soft voice in the tree tops, to listen to the water lapping on the shore or against the bow of the canoe as he fished, was his chosen way of seeking pleasure, health and fresh inspiration. In the summers of 1903, 1905 and 1907 he spent much time, about two months in each of the two latter years, at Lake Caughnawana, in the wilderness of the Province of



A day off on Tucker's Bay.

Quebec, having become a member of the Caughnawana Fishing and Hunting Club. "This country," as he described it, "is about half under water, resembling the most watered parts of the Adirondacks. The rest is impossible (impassable?) forest except where trails have been cut."

His enjoyment of the out-of-door, camp life in the woods was as keen as the rest and utter freedom from responsibilities were refreshing. "A swim in the lake before breakfast," he wrote from camp, "a trip for a day or half-day, and evening trolling to supply the next day's demands, unhappily too easily met, a night long and restful, certainly makes a physically healthful if not useful life." Once he gave his prescription for old age. "How fearful and unbelieving some of our old men and women become! How dark it all looks and how dangerous are the tendencies of the times! How every weakness magnifies itself in their eyes and every good, progressive factor shrinks out of sight! I would recommend two remedies for their disease:—first, to read reliable history to find out how weak and evil things have been even in the best days of the past, and from how many defilements we have been delivered, and secondly, to stalk a moose or swing a fishing rod, or point a camera for a month in an untrodden wilderness."³⁵

His letters descriptive of things seen and heard show the appreciative response of his nature to the wild life of bird and animal and fish. "The prettiest things are the families of young ducks with their mothers, beautifully trained (the young ones), to answer calls, now to dive, now to seek cover, now to skim off the water at a furious rate, now to scatter, depending on the proximity and apparent intentions of the foe." "I caught the most gorgeous trout I have ever seen. It weighed about 3 lbs. only but its colors were superb. Its sides were a brilliant orange, its back black, and the crimson spots came out like specks of blood. Along its belly was a white stripe and its wings and tail were black and orange, edged with white enamel. As it rolled over in the water previous to landing, its effect was brilliant in the extreme and it was just as pretty in the boat."

With all his ardor for these pleasures and recreations he kept them within bounds in two respects. In the first place he was a conscientious sportsman, never taking more fish than could be used for food. One of his camping companions says: "He was the finest sportsman I have ever known. Skilled with the rod and untiring in the pursuit, he never took a single fish more than he felt we could eat, and always reeled in his line

and unjointed his rod when that point was reached." I can imagine his dry way of telling the story of the inexperienced gunner who accompanied a veteran sportsman to shoot birds. Suddenly they came upon some birds which, not startled into flight, sought escape by merely running along the ground. When the novice raised his gun and followed a running bird with his aim the veteran called out sharply: "Oh, don't shoot him running." The novice lowered his gun. "I wasn't going to shoot him running," he said; "I was waiting for him to stop."

In another more important respect Isaac Sharpless limited his recreational enjoyments. He did not permit them to take him away on First-days (Sundays) from the religious exercises and duties the maintenance of which he felt to be highly important. "I don't like going on fishing trips on First-days," he once wrote to a friend, "especially when it means cutting meeting," and he declined to join a congenial group in the ownership of a camp not far from Philadelphia because he did not wish to absent himself from home over the week-ends. In an article appearing in the *Westonian* in 1909 he quietly voiced a warning on this subject—a warning having back of it the force of his own example: "The young man who makes an excuse that his

week-days are full of strenuous endeavor, and so spends his First-days in automobiling, or canoeing, or camping, may be resting his brain and building up his body, but he is seriously risking his spiritual life. Darwin says that he atrophied his aesthetic powers by exclusive devotion to science. The man who gives himself over to business and pleasure will surely atrophy his spiritual faculties, and some day he will waken up to the fact as Darwin did, that the loss is irredeemable. The religious side of a man's nature can not be neglected except at the very serious peril of its permanent disappearance. A few hours once a week is the very least that will keep it alive, and if these few hours go to a holiday of even innocent sport it is a calamity which time alone will reveal."

Two other points in connection with his camping trips should be mentioned—what he gave and what he got through them. What he gave has been told by friends who were fortunate enough to be his companions on such occasions. The fellowship of camp life is a delightfully free and natural relationship and Isaac Sharpless gave himself in it freely and naturally. He would sometimes talk of persons and events with a frankness that trusted in his hearers' good judgment as to how far his remarks could properly

be repeated to others. "As I returned from the camping trips we used to take together," wrote a life-long friend shortly after Isaac Sharpless's death, "I always thought what a privilege it was to have such a man for my friend. His mind dwelt on large things and his contributions to the conversation of any group were always elevating as well as interesting and instructive." "Nearly all that he did, was, and said, was admirable," wrote a younger man, "and somehow challenged one to high endeavor. I have been again and again struck in our camping experiences (and these while not very frequent, date back to 1889) with the remarkable way in which his presence in camp raised the whole tone of the conversation, not by what he said only, but by some subtle way that he had of bringing out the best in all of us."

From his camp holidays he got a more complete relaxation than would readily have been possible in any other way. Those who have spent similar times in the woods know how, under the magic influence of nature and of a life devoted almost wholly to physical existence, the affairs and responsibilities which loomed so large at home become a sort of shadowy dream-world left behind one at the railroad station. This was his experience — a well-earned, much needed, and

welcome experience. "I confess," so ran one of his letters, "that these woods are not favorable to thinking about houses or colleges or other sublunary matters * * * *. I suppose there is such a place as Haverford College and that I am partly responsible for it, but the knowledge has become subconscious, the only real objects are moose and lunge and beaver and guides and lakes and woods and Indians." And on another occasion—"I thought I would want to know about public affairs, but for all I seem to care, John Weaver may be the Czar of Russia, and Teddy Roosevelt clerk of the Yearly Meeting."

CHAPTER XI

THE LEADER IN QUAKER EDUCATION

The issue of *The Friend* for Seventh Month 24th, 1880, carried to its readers the following message from Isaac Sharpless: "The necessity of keeping the children of Friends separate from the influences of the Public Schools is felt more strongly each succeeding year; and the concern has lately taken such practical shape that but very few now go to schools which are not taught by members. This separation has thrown the teachers of the Society outside the influences which are at work in raising the standard and improving the quality of the teaching in the public and normal schools. The isolated position of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting through all the life of the generation which is now coming into activity and influence, has kept it from joining actively in general movements inside the Society, looking toward the same end. So that, a community by ourselves, there is danger that we will not make that progress in educational reform, which the world around us is making,

* * * *. Such a loss would seriously detract from the influence we have possessed in advancing the great moral reforms we have at heart, and would indirectly be prejudicial to the best interests of the Society.

“To hold our position in this respect, influences should be set at work to increase the general interest in the subject, to arouse the activities and the enthusiasm of the teachers, and to point the way to better results and higher motives. Such influences might take any of the following forms:

“1st. A general Educational Convention held at a convenient place and time, for all teachers of Friends Schools, for committees of such schools and for others interested in the subject in our Yearly Meeting. * * * *

“2nd. The publication of an educational periodical, especially adapted to our wants.****

“3rd. Some system like the societies for ‘Home Study,’ which should encourage the prosecution of systematic study by young people after leaving school.”

The year 1880 in which the foregoing article appeared was the first of a decade which may be regarded as the beginning of a new era in education in Pennsylvania. About one hundred years previously, the Revolutionary War had been an-

other milestone in the Society's educational affairs. During the first century of Pennsylvania Quaker history the earliest schools established by Friends in Philadelphia had been supplemented by small schools in the various Quaker communities throughout the countryside. But this educational system failed to meet adequately the needs of the Society. The country schools, although fairly plentiful, were not universal; nor were they well organized into a Yearly Meeting system. The education which they provided was elementary in character with special emphasis on studies that were useful in fitting for the practical duties of life. And besides there was difficulty in finding Friends who were properly qualified as teachers. At the same time that these conditions existed in the schools the membership of the Society had been increasing and pushing out into the more remote country districts, with the result that many children were growing up with little more than a primary school education, and some had hardly that. Outside of Philadelphia the state of education in the Society probably deserved in measure the comment of the English Friend, visiting Pennsylvania about that time, who said: "There is a low, vulgar education among the Friends here * * * *."

When, as the result of the Revolutionary War

and its accompanying conditions, Friends turned their attention primarily inward to the affairs of the Society, an improvement took place in their educational system. One of the four main points in the "Reformation" decreed by the Yearly Meeting was education, and the Meeting embarked on a policy of responsibility for the system of elementary schools within its borders. About twenty years later another advance came in the establishment of Westtown Boarding School. Yet these improvements left much to be desired. The course of study still remained limited and the difficulty of finding competent teachers continued. The standard of education in the Society during the decades following the Revolutionary War did not rise above the mediocre. Friends as a body had not arrived at a state of lively interest in general learning and had not acquired broad educational views.

In the decade 1880 to 1890 a new interest and spirit manifested itself. Something approaching an educational revival swept through the whole Society in America. In 1888 Isaac Sharpless, as Secretary of the Educational Association of Friends in America, addressed to a Friend in each Yearly Meeting a series of questions on educational matters. The answers from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting showed that during the

preceding five years about \$500,000 had been contributed to Westtown School and Haverford College; that there had been "a marked and healthy increase of interest" in education; that teachers' salaries had increased; that a very active series of educational meetings had been held at Friends Select School, in which many prominent educators had spoken; and that "the great revival in educational matters in the last five or ten years has been mainly confined to the intermediate and primary schools." Summing up conditions in the Society in America Isaac Sharpless's report concluded: "The answers show, in the main, a gratifying increase of interest in our schools. The progress of denominational education is evident; the importance of it is generally admitted, and the flow of money and thought and effort in that direction has been greater than in any other five years of the Society's history."

In an article written about a year earlier he had called attention to this advance and had added, characteristically, the remark, "It would not be surprising if the time would come when we should be proud of our school system."

In the activities which were partly cause and partly effect of this movement he was a foremost leader. The three enterprises which he advocated in his paper quoted above were among the forces

contributing to it. He was, as already indicated, Secretary from 1883 to 1888 of the Educational Association of Friends in America, and a strong influence in the Friends Teachers Association of Philadelphia. With Watson W. Dewees he founded in 1880 and edited until 1884, *The Student*, "A monthly Journal, devoted to the Interests of Education in the Society of Friends," the first venture of its kind in the history of American Quakerism. After he had relinquished the editorship to others he continued to contribute articles freely to its columns until its termination in the early nineties.

Through these years Isaac Sharpless exerted his influence to bring about among Friends a greater appreciation of education, higher standards and more rapid progress. It is said that a certain owner in conveying a lot of land to Clifton College, England, included a condition "that no noisome or offensive trade or business, except that of a school for boys or girls, may be carried on therein." Friends had hardly fallen into that attitude, but they had failed sufficiently to value their schools. Isaac Sharpless wanted them to become imbued with something of the spirit of the Chinese maxim: "All pursuits are mean in comparison with learning."

"When our school-men and women," he wrote,

“grasp the idea firmly that it is their duty to give the best mental and moral training possible, when they appreciate and live out the theory logically involved in the phrase ‘a guarded religious education,’ when we all understand that mental development is not obstructive to spiritual growth, but tends to produce humility and the Christian graces, and know how vitally our schools are connected with the usefulness of our members in the world, we will then unitedly resolve that the growth manifest among us shall not cease, but that effort and thought and money shall flow more and more liberally into this beneficent system.”³⁶

He wanted progress. He was himself taking liberal and advanced positions. He was exerting his influence for the readjustment of the school and college curriculums which had grown to overlap; he was pointing out that the Friends schools were defective in physical culture and was taking a broad position in favor of athletic games, including foot-ball, when conservatives were skeptical or hostile. He continually emphasized the necessity for strong faculties and for Friends to fill them. Speaking in Berkeley, California, in 1909, he said: “Nothing more insistently stares us in the face in the East, and probably in the West also, than the shortage in

the supply of competent teachers of all grades, adapted to the work of our schools and willing to take up the work as a profession for life."³⁷ In these earlier years of the eighties he was urging teachers to prepare themselves adequately. "We have repeatedly expressed the belief," so runs an editorial in *The Student*, no doubt from his pen, "that teaching should become a business for which people would prepare as for a life-work, to which they would look for permanent support—in short, that teaching should become a profession." And upon school and college managements he pressed the necessity of higher salaries, which in turn required ample endowments.

He felt, also, that the schools were not living up to their responsibilities on the moral side. What I take to be another of his editorials in *The Student*, or at least one carrying his approval, says (about 1883): "If we were to point out the remediable defects most common in our schools one of the first would be the subject we spoke of in the first editorial of last number, the neglect of the development of character among the children; the disposition to look on teaching merely as an intellectual operation, a machinery by which the greatest amount of mental training and knowledge could be instilled in the least time."³⁸ With this may be coupled a quotation

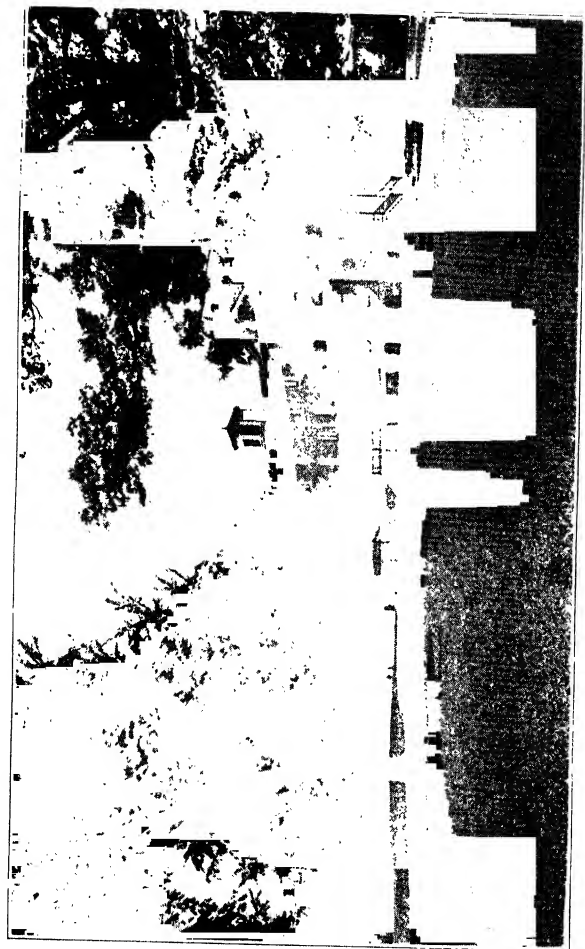
from his address, *What Constitutes a Friends' School*, published in *The Student* in 1887:

"It is a 'guarded religious education' which is commended to us, and so far as I know, Friends have a monopoly of the phrase. The first adjective is negative but the second is necessarily positive, for religion cannot be made up of negatives. A Friends' School, therefore, must have a double duty, to guard itself against bad influences and to develop a religious life among its students. If it takes the one without the other, it omits one of the essential elements. To be honest with its patrons it must do more than make this influence a name. It must be a pervading reality. It needs an active desire and a grasping of every opportunity, not a relegation of the whole work to the Holy Spirit, but an ever present recognition of responsibility which takes form in positive words spoken and deeds done. This must constitute one of the essential points of a real Friends' School.

"What is the duty of a Friends' School in teaching the peculiar views of Friends to the children? There may be two answers to this question depending on the status of the school. If it is one founded for Friends' children and whose object was mainly developed for the benefit of our own membership, I think positive instructions in this line should be given, and if

outsiders seek and receive the benefit of the school they will do it with the understanding of its purposes. It may not be right to use efforts to undermine their faith in their parents' religion and actually to seek them as proselytes to Quakerism, but it is unreasonable to allow them to interfere with the definiteness and efficiency of the doctrinal instruction given to Friends' children. We ought to teach the next generation Friends' views on immediate worship, the theory on which our un-prearranged meetings are held, our absence of ordinances and our opposition to war and oaths; for many of our children if they do not learn these at school will never learn them as they ought. Those not members will actually be glad to know all this as matters of information even if they are not convinced by it, and the leaven of Quakerism has great permeating power, as it lies in the heart of a worldling or a high ritualist. I believe that in all our Friends' Schools, intended more especially for Friends' children, the views of Friends should be taught without hesitation and without compromise.

"The case is somewhat different in schools founded and conducted by Friends but intended for the public. Here the patronage must be considered, and it would be to some extent a breach



FOUNDERS' HALL.
The original Building at Haverford. Erected 1832-33.

of trust to enforce denominational teaching, when the original object was mainly to give the community the benefit of sound mental and moral training. It may be doubted whether these should be called Friends' Schools, inside the limits of the definition which this paper elects to make."³⁹

Large as was Isaac Sharpless's service to the cause of general educational ideals and practice in the Society of Friends it was not his most important contribution. What entitles him to be called something of a pioneer, that which made him the most significant figure of the last fifty years in the educational life of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, not to say of American Quakerism, was the influence he exerted upon Friends in the direction of higher, or college, education. For even by the close of the first three-quarters of last century college education had not been received into favor among the large conservative element of the Yearly Meeting, nor was there an appreciation of the Society's need for the services of men who had received the larger intellectual stimulus and wider outlook derived from college training.

Behind this attitude of Friends in the 70's and early 80's of last century lay some two hundred years of history—two hundred years, for

the first one hundred and fifty of which they had had no college of their own and during the whole of which only a comparatively few of their members had gone to the colleges of others. The inhabitants of the Colonies belonging to other denominations had early taken steps to found their colleges, but Friends lagged far behind. It was not that the founders of Quakerism or the first Friends who came to Pennsylvania were hostile to higher education. The first generation of Pennsylvania Quaker settlers had its fair proportion of cultured and university trained men, but the real difference in this matter between the Quakers and other denominations lay in this, that to these latter groups colleges were essential for the training of their ministers and preachers, while Friends, with their emphasis upon the doctrine of the Inner Light, held that college education was not requisite for the ministry. Lacking the incentive which from 1636 to 1748 prompted the Calvinist clergyman, John Harvard, to found Harvard College, two Harvard graduates to start Yale, the Episcopalians to originate Williams and Mary, and the Presbyterians to establish Princeton, the first generation of Friends in Pennsylvania delayed the founding of any institutions of higher learning. The delay was costly. Among the generations

which followed, growing up without a broadly educated leadership, and inclining to become conservative imitators of their forefathers rather than courageous pioneers, there was not only a failure to grasp the need, but a tendency among some to push the view that the ministry did not require learning to the length of holding that higher education was a positive detriment to spirituality. The Revolutionary War while stimulating elementary education probably retarded the cause of the college. So it was that not until fifty years later did Friends see in the establishment of Haverford School the first Quaker institution of higher learning in America. Nor did the founding of Haverford in 1833 mean that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as a whole had been converted. The founders of Haverford were a little group of more advanced and liberal Friends who went beyond the views of the conservative majority and for "the first fifty years of its existence Haverford College seemed in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to represent an alien influence and was treated with a suspicion which often verged upon hostility."

By the beginning of the last quarter of the century conditions had somewhat improved. Haverford College graduates had increased in numbers and in influence in the Yearly Meet-

ing. But they were still a minority largely kept on the fringe of the Society's official affairs. The large conservative group was still cold. Westtown boys in those days rarely went to Haverford or to any college.

Amid these conditions there emerges the youthful figure of Isaac Sharpless, a scholar at Westtown School and a member of this same conservative group of Friends. Instead of leaving school when most of the boys do, he decides to be one of the few who graduate. Then he returns to the school as teacher and soon becomes first teacher of mathematics and so the chief member of the faculty. While in this responsible position he makes another decision of far greater import for himself and the Society of Friends. He decides to go to college—not merely the Quaker Haverford but to far off, unknown, un-Quakerly Harvard. One of our older educators, a contemporary of Isaac Sharpless, has characterized this step taken by him as the most important event of the last century in the realm of Quaker education. Had he come from the more progressive group already supporting Haverford his action would have had less significance. But as it was, it sowed the seed of a new attitude toward college education in the whole conservative Westtown group—a group which repre-

sented the majority of the Yearly Meeting. One of their own members had broken away from the ancient tradition, had taken the plunge, had survived, and had lived to be the foremost advocate of advanced learning in the Yearly Meeting.

The wise historian will not be hasty in connecting events as cause and effect. There are so many forces at work in almost any situation that it is difficult to gauge the weight to be attributed to any one factor as a causative influence. The exact effects of Isaac Sharpless's action and thought cannot be measured but certain facts can be stated. During the years 1868 to 1876 five boys at Westtown remained to graduate. In 1872 Isaac Sharpless went to the Lawrence Scientific School and then returned to teach at Westtown for two years. In 1875 he went to Haverford. In the three years which followed, eighteen boys, all but one of whom had been his pupils, graduated at Westtown and nine of them went to Haverford College. The current thus started kept on flowing and when Isaac Sharpless became president of Haverford he took a deep interest in encouraging and helping Westtown boys to get to college.

Actions may speak louder than words but often it is a combination of actions and words which moves men most effectively. Isaac Sharp-

less not only acted but preached the gospel of higher education. As he grew older and studied more in Pennsylvania Quaker history he came to realize the twofold consequences to the Society of Friends of their lack of college trained leaders—the loss of influence in the world around them, and the factionalism which grew up within their ranks till it burst them asunder with catastrophic force. Looking back on these twin evils, the outer and the inner, he wrote of the one: “It is idle to speculate how much we have lost of our inheritance by narrow conceptions of our duties and responsibilities. It may almost be said that we have lost a continent, for in 1700 no denomination in America had a greater opportunity than we. Could we have seized advancing thought as each generation needed it, modifying our methods and abating our prejudices by broad views gained by correct intelligence, holding tenaciously all the while to what was vital and fundamental in our early message, America might have been ours.”⁴⁰

And of the internal disaster he said: “All through our history, the shores of our Society have been strewn with the wrecks of great men, against whom prejudices arose, from their very ability to see more clearly the weaknesses and needs of their times. Thus it has been that we

have had the history of a very pure democracy, not merely a democracy of spiritual opportunity, as it should have been, but an intellectual democracy as well, which tolerated no one wiser than itself. This intolerance necessarily begot separations. That there were doctrinal differences of a fundamental sort which divided the extremes in 1827, need not be denied. But that such differences existed in the mass of right thinking Friends is more than questionable. Did similar conditions exist to-day (1909), in most of our Yearly Meetings, there would be no separation. Some of the extremes would be parted with, but the better sense of the mass of the people would say that divergences were not necessarily fatal to Christian brotherhood.”⁴¹

Looking to the future he earnestly desired that Friends should awake and that the mistakes of the past should not be continued or repeated. He deemed it essential to the maintenance and growth of Quakerism that Friends should gain the advantages of liberal education. Most of us would agree, he wrote in 1917, “that it is impossible to sustain our Society in this community by an ignorant membership, and that the more of good education we have amongst us the brighter prospect the forward look will show.”⁴² He foresaw before it came to pass how better

education would help the Society to meet its internal differences. At the Conference of the Friends' Educational Association in 1888 he said: "However these questions may settle themselves it seems to me that many of our Church difficulties and estrangements will be softened by the broader views and more honest humility which education will give; and hence that all lovers of Church harmony should join to speed on the cause of sound intellectual culture."

Pope's line, "A little learning is a dangerous thing," Isaac Sharpless declared to be "a sentiment as untrue as it is tersely expressed." He thought a little learning good, more learning better, and wide learning best. The attitude that higher education is unnecessary, that it is dangerous and in conflict with the greatest spirituality, he vigorously combated by word as well as by deed.

While he thus labored as an individual there was a force at work more potent than that of any individual. That force was Haverford College. To describe its influence in his own words: "It was the pioneer of breadth and liberality in our denomination in America. Its environment was in the midst of the Yearly Meeting where, because of the very stringency and rigidity of traditional Quakerism, it was most needed. Its

policies were sometimes unwise because misdirected. But just as soon as it found the opportunity to unify the constituency which surrounded it, and to place itself in direct relation to the mass of Friends, the effect of its work began to be seen. Not in uprooting the fundamental principles of Quakerism, rather in establishing them on a firmer basis, but in giving that breadth of vision which, in time, drew the line between the necessary and the evanescent."⁴³

It cannot be said that Haverford College might not have performed this work under other leadership than Isaac Sharpless's. What is evident is that, guided by him, it more and more won the confidence of Friends and more and more gave back to the Yearly Meeting in the persons of its graduates the qualities of more liberal culture, wider outlook, and greater intellectual grasp.

These forces, of which Isaac Sharpless was so influential a part, have contributed to bring about far-reaching changes in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. That such changes have occurred few will deny. To recognize their existence is easier than to describe and appraise them, especially for one whose mature life has fallen only in the latter half of the period in which they have been developing, but it would seem

that something like the following has taken place:

1. At bottom there is manifest in the Yearly Meeting a greater openness of mind, more readiness to examine every proposition, old or new, on its merits, and less blind regard for the traditions of the past and the mere fiat of authority. This fundamental change affects the Meeting in various ways.

2. The Meeting is no longer so sharply divided between the leaders and the rank and file, nor between the old and the young. Those in official position do not exclusively control; the members at large, including the younger ones, are accorded a welcome hearing, take more interest, and probably have a greater sense of responsibility.

3. There is more ability to handle the internal differences in the membership, to find a basis of unity, or at least a *modus vivendi*, carried out in a spirit of Christian brotherhood. Some of the differences between the Gurneyite and the Wilburite may still exist in the Meeting in modified form, there are no doubt divergences in theology and diversities of temperament but there is more power to meet these difficulties without disruption and disaster, more ability to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials, more toler-

ance without surrender of convictions. "There is a more profound unity in our Yearly Meeting than for a half century, perhaps for two centuries." Such was Isaac Sharpless's view in 1910.

4. The spirit of wise progress has grown within the membership. There is less tendency to oppose changes simply in the name of the past and more readiness to examine new proposals open-mindedly and to weigh them fairly.

5. The meeting is getting more into touch with other groups, Friendly and otherwise, is letting its life flow out more freely to mingle with and influence the currents of life about it. Again I quote Isaac Sharpless, this time in 1919: "Our Yearly Meeting, after a long time of dependence on earlier generations, has come to the point where it feels the pulses of the times and responds."

There is no thought that the foregoing is a complete catalogue of all important changes which may have ensued as the result, in part, of the influence of Isaac Sharpless and college education. Moreover, the statement of these changes does not imply either a judgment upon former generations of Friends as wholly at fault or an award of perfection to present-day Quakerism. A time of change is a time of danger as well as a time of possibilities for good. If traditionalism

holds back with its dead hand, liberalism may lose its way and stumble into pitfalls. But liberalism combined with a faith which holds as convictions the essential principles of Quakerism presents new possibilities of growth and usefulness. Toward the creation of this attitude in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Isaac Sharpless made no mean contribution.

CHAPTER XII

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

The Society of Friends was Isaac Sharpless's spiritual fatherland. A birthright member, growing up in a mental and spiritual atmosphere permeated with conservative Quakerism, he had full opportunity to gain an early acquaintance with the faith and practices of the Society. As he grew older, and studied and thought more, his grasp of Friends' principles became deeper and more discerning. Keen observer as he was, he saw the weaknesses of the Yearly Meeting of which he was a member but with characteristic fairness he recognized also its strength. The failures of Friends in practice, whether in the past or in the present, never shook his firm faith in the soundness of the essential principles and ideals of Quakerism.

In his own Monthly Meeting at Haverford he was an active and influential member. At the time of its establishment as a separate Monthly Meeting in 1904 his example brought into active

service not a few younger members. In the Yearly Meeting the strong but quiet influence which he possessed in his later years came as a gradual development. His service in it lay not so much in official positions held, as in his general influence and his participation in various activities among which were some undertaken by members of the Yearly Meeting, but not officially part of the Meeting's work.

Of one such enterprise, the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia, he was the founder and for its first seven years its president. It came into being immediately after the celebration of the centennial of the Fourth and Arch Streets Meeting-house in 1904. Its origin and purpose are described briefly in two letters from Isaac Sharpless written in 1912 to an interested friend. "Dear Friend,

"The Historical Society was started immediately following the meeting at 4th. and Arch Streets. I had the honor to present to the Committee in charge of that celebration the purposes for the formation of such a Society. Jonathan Evans, who was President of the movement, warmly supported the Society.

Thy friend,

Isaac Sharpless."

“Dear Friend,

“If thee would get hold of a few of the copies of the London Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society, I think thee would immediately see the value of that publication * * * *. The Philadelphia Society publishes an occasional Bulletin, has something of a collection which can be increased indefinitely if we had storage accommodations of a fire-proof character, and conducts annual excursions and meetings. The purpose of this is to stimulate an interest in historical matters on the part of our membership generally. This will be useful for the sake of interesting members in the past history and encouraging the securing of valuable historical material as well as giving a certain historical sense to the Yearly Meeting. It should also be useful in a study of the Society of Friends in its future development. We have to learn the difference between methods and principles and certainly do not need any further imitation of the former in minute directions. If we are to grow in the future as I think we shall it is well for us to know just what Quakerism stands for. The failure in this respect and the lack of regard for historical Quakerism has largely caused the divergences which we now have in the West.

“London Yearly Meeting is developing per-

haps with equal rapidity in numbers as the result of a proper appreciation of what the real message of Quakerism is and has been."

Another Quaker activity of which Isaac Sharpless was the originator and which lay close to his heart traces its origin to his contact with the Adult School movement in England. On his visit there in 1906 he made it a point to get into touch with the movement in several cities. The seventy or more schools throughout England with their 80,000 members impressed him. Of the Bunhill Fields School, in London, he wrote: "It seems to me a center of real Quakerism made up almost entirely of outside people, who have caught the spirit of it. I have heard that it is the best Friends Meeting in London and can well believe it."

It seemed to him that America needed something similar, if not in method, at least in results. He saw the great mass of American working men out of touch with the Churches, he saw the need of action by the Churches to reach them and he felt that the Society of Friends might be especially qualified to "lead the way into a successful solution of the problem, if we have the intelligence to see the proper relations of our principles to human effort, the vitality to work

them out and the devotion to make them succeed."

Two main reasons lay in his mind for such a movement. In the first place he held that members of the Christian churches needed to get into closer contact with the working man if they wished to reform conditions in our great cities. "The Institutional Churches," he said, "and the Y. M. C. A.s which add Gymnasiums and Libraries to their religious efforts are the great remedial agencies of the day. The line between the spiritual and the secular is breaking down. Man is one whole. You reach the soul through the body and the body through the soul * * * *. He who recognizes this unity will be in the future the greatest moral reformer." "If we would know them" (the working men), "we must go to them, satisfy them with our efforts, acknowledge that we have as much to learn as to teach, and preach, with an insistence and honesty which brings conviction, the Christian gospel of universal brotherhood. Here seems to me the great opportunity for Friends in the work of moral reform for it opens the way to every sort of influence."

The other consideration which impressed him was the good that might ensue to the Society itself from such an outreaching effort, the possible

upbuilding of new centers of Quakerism, the outlet for unused energies of members, the wider vision and a quickened life. "It is to be hoped," he wrote in 1910, "that every meeting-house from whose neighborhood the Friends have moved will not be immediately converted into cash, but will still be used as a center of beneficent work for those nearby."⁴⁴

In the situation of the North Meeting, Philadelphia, he thought he saw an opportunity to make a beginning in this direction. Its Meeting-house at Sixth and Noble Streets was located in a district whose character had gradually changed with the passing years. Friends had largely moved away from the neighborhood which was now generally occupied by working people, among whom there seemed to be opportunity for useful work such as he had in mind. He hoped, writes one who was active in the enterprise, "to see the Sixth and Noble Streets Meeting-house a center of neighborhood activities centering about an adult group that would be willing and able to experiment, to make mistakes if need be, but to develop and express itself in terms of brotherhood to man." A start was made in the Meeting-house with a Sunday School, a few clubs for boys and girls and "his rather erratic but distinctly loyal group of adult men."

His faithful efforts in this work, taking him from home and rest on First-days, were, however, doomed to meet with serious disappointments. On the one hand he was unable to get the Friends of the North Meeting to consent to the larger use of the Meeting-house which the expanding work required. Quietly, patiently and persistently he put his plea before them with clearness but it was consistently refused. A glimpse of the situation may be caught in a letter which he wrote to a sympathetic friend in 1912: "Thee may not know that we have just been turned down by the Property Committee without, however, having any reason given, in an application for the use of the Committee Room for basketball purposes involving no apparatus, which would not interfere with the Monthly Meeting; and an agreement on our part to cover the windows and protect the lights by wire screens. It will require the (a?) change of attitude of certain Friends of the Monthly Meeting before any concessions are made. I am unable to tell thee the inwardness of this condition of affairs, that is I have not attempted to probe beneath the surface. Individual members that I have talked to seemed to be favorable but the corporate influence has always (been?) in the negative. The last communication I had from

them I was requested not to raise the subject again, and that the decision was final."

Expansion was necessary for the best interests of the work and since this could not take place as needed in the Meeting-house a move was made to 451 North Marshall Street. But it was a deep disappointment to him that the Meeting-house could not be the home of this neighborhood service. It is now a social center under the direction of the Smith Memorial Playground Association. "He saw in its free use," writes the friend already quoted, "an enlarging of the vision among our own membership as well as a social experiment of value.

"His wise, philosophic, and genial spirit would smile ruefully, I think, to know that 'the jingle of the guinea' was able to accomplish that which he longed Friends to do of their own free will * * * *. Neighborhood needs are no doubt being more adequately met, but President Sharpless always felt that Friends lost a rich opportunity for growth and service."

His other chief disappointment in this effort came to him in the indifferent success of the Adult Class. After the removal from the Meeting-house it continued to meet, but its numbers dwindled. As further experience was gained he came to feel that this form of social and re-

ligious activity, so successful with the working-man of England, was not adapted to the conditions and needs of his American brother. Notwithstanding this result with the men his interest in the neighborhood activities for the children never ceased and he continued for long as the President of the North House Association.

In 1890 appeared one of the first literary productions in which Isaac Sharpless expressed himself as a student of Quakerism. This came in the form of an address on *The Spirit of Early Quakerism* delivered as one in a series of four lectures arranged by the Overseers of Twelfth Street Meeting on *Some of the Distinguishing Views of Friends*. No one can read this address and his subsequent writings on the subject without perceiving his firm and comprehensive grasp of the faith of Friends. Writing in 1916 under the title *Past and Present* with reference to country Quaker Meetings such as his own old Meeting at Birmingham he indicated some of the qualities which he deemed significant in Quakerism. "But is there any future," he asked, "for these old country meetings of this corner of Pennsylvania? Not on the old lines. Not in the policy inaugurated in Revolutionary times of denominational separation, the cultivation of exclusive habits, the making of a sect by external

badges from which the life has departed, the non-participation in political and community work. Simplicity is still a virtue and should have its place. Literal truthfulness will never wear out as a dependable and potential element of respect and influence. The habit of forming judgments on what is right rather than on what is expedient, is still going to count in the value of a citizen and of a Christian. The causes of peace and purity and temperance are still with us no less urgently than in the past. The worship which men do themselves as contrasted with what is done for them by ritual or form is still a live factor in spiritual experience. The open-minded attitude towards developing habits of thought will still count more than the traditional acceptance of creeds.”⁴⁵ Quakerism in his mind stood for simplicity, stood for literal truthfulness, for sincerity in word and deed, stood for forming moral judgments by principles not by the nice calculation of un-fore-seable results. Earnestly as he desired that Friends should take part in the life around them he saw that the Quaker conscience operating faithfully on principle rather than expediency fore-closed some kinds of participation, and led to a life of some outward isolation. Speaking of the Quaker with this sort of conscience, who was to him the real Quaker,

he said: "He must go through life more or less isolated, not from lack of sympathy for others, for he has this in the highest degree, but because the machinery of modern methods is too rigid for his open-minded and independent soul. He will take his orders from his own discerning heart rather than from current opinion or popular impulse."⁴⁶

But the essence of Quakerism was to him its spiritual quality—its knowledge of and its faith in a religion, not of books or creeds, but of experience. Not possessing in himself a great prophetic gift nor by nature given to intense mystical experience, he, nevertheless, knew, intellectually and spiritually, the faith of the Inner Light. All his appreciation of intellectual achievement, all his enthusiasm for higher education did not lead him to enthrone the intellect above the spirit. Nor did merely moral virtues lie at the heart of religion. "It is not possible," he said, "to leave out the emotions in any effective religion. It is, perhaps, primarily an appeal to them. A coldly correct theology, a life based alone on moral virtues, will not satisfy the best ideals of men. The warmth of feeling, the enthusiasm of self-surrender, 'the expulsive power of a new affection,' will have their large place in the best religion of the normal man. The in-

telleet will determine much of the form which the life and the emotions will take, but the intellectual man must learn to look below the form, upon the underlying spirit, and judge spiritual judgment.”⁴⁷ “The spirit of Early Quakerism,” ran his words in the 1890 address alluded to above, “was the Holy Spirit of God, a Spirit which intellect or study, or even reverence for its operations in bygone days, should not limit, which is new in every man and in every age. The revelation that George Fox had in the Vale of Beavor—‘The Lord God opened to me, by His invisible power, how every man was enlightened by the Divine Light of Christ’—faintly seen by him at first, but more and more clearly as his spirituality developed, is the revelation, without which all other revelations are vain; for which we, as individuals and as a church, must wait, in a spirit of prayer, faith, humility and expectancy, to do the work of the Nineteenth century as faithfully and as fully as he did his of the Seventeenth.”

With impartial justice he appraised at times the virtues and the weaknesses of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. During the period from his early to his later years the unseen forces which silently shape the lives of individuals and groups worked great changes in the Meeting. There

was a time when he might have said—I do not know of his actually saying it—that narrowness and traditionalism were its greatest limitations. But writing in the last decade of his life he pointed out an entirely different tendency as the Meeting's chief danger. "Our great weakness now," he said in 1913, "is not unsoundness of doctrine, or false ideals of meetings for worship, or serious immorality of living, but lives wholly devoted to business and pleasure and devoid of other-worldliness, and this situation cannot be *wholly* met by appeals to individual faithfulness on the old lines of Friendly duty."⁴⁸

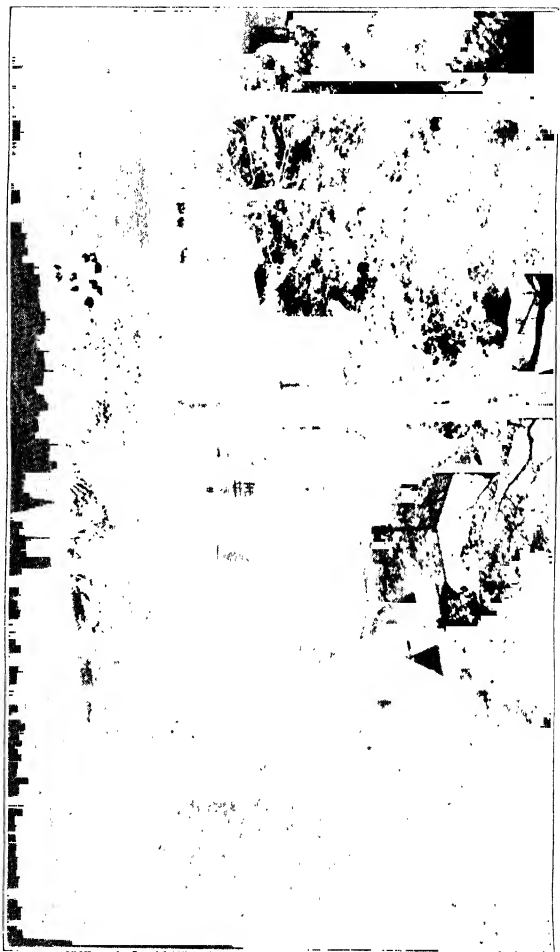
"The young man just starting in business is the critical problem. He has many healthy tendencies;—many experiences which he does not often unfold to others. But secular duties are pressing, business success hangs in the balance and every atom of energy seems needed to carry him over the times of crisis. He will in time, he thinks, take up the serious religious and social duties which he recognizes must complete a wholesome and normal life. The demands of recreation seem imperative, and, save an hour at meeting, his life is constituted of business and pleasure. And so the days when habit and character are formed pass by, the spiritual faculties are atrophied and too late the man finds that all

he can be is an honorable man of business for whom physical comfort and pleasure are necessities of life. By that time he has forgotten the aspirations and intentions of his youth."

"The advice given to our young people a generation or two ago from the gallery was two-fold, to attend meetings regularly and to heed faithfully the monitions of the inward voice—most excellent and effective counsels. For certain temperaments this was sufficient to produce a saintly, consecrated life. That they did not fully meet the needs of the other class is manifest by many a worldly life; many a nominal Quaker.

* * * *

"Something more than meeting going is necessary to meet these conditions. Every young man can find an evening a week or an hour or two on First-day to give to work which will place him in direct contact with those who need his personal aid, not money but intellectual and spiritual sympathy and fraternity, for a man always finds time for that in which he is most interested. He will begin to appreciate the real meaning of social service. He will know the ills and diseases of society, and life for him will have a new meaning. He will come to his religious meetings and his Friendly conferences with something to give and something definite to learn."⁴⁹



THE HAVERFORD RESIDENCE OF ISAAC SHARPLESS AND FAMILY.
Built in 1882. At the present time (1926), the home of Lydia C. Sharpless and others
of the family.

I have already ventured to put forward the view that the greatest force in changing Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during Isaac Sharpless's lifetime was the inflow of a new spirit of liberalism. This new spirit held, in Isaac Sharpless's mind, the key to the successful handling of controversial questions and the secret of wholesome progress. How to combine unity within the membership with a frank meeting of issues and sane progress is a fundamental problem of a democratic body such as the Society of Friends. One way of preserving unity—and a way not infrequently practiced—is to turn quickly away from any issue upon which there is strong difference of opinion. But to Isaac Sharpless this did not seem the true way. On one occasion in Yearly Meeting about 1915 a question arose on which there was considerable difference of views. After some time had been spent in discussion which did not really meet the point, the meeting left the subject and a number of Friends voiced great satisfaction in the maintenance of love and unity. Then uprose the tall figure of Isaac Sharpless, then came the words, brief and direct: "Friends, I am not much impressed with a love and unity which is maintained by never discussing any question upon which there is a disagreement of opinion." On the other hand he did not

wish issues or changes pushed with a spirit which creates division. "It is not wholesome change or sane progress which creates division or disunity. These are the normal conditions of all good society. That it is our duty to improve and not simply to defend is an axiom and condition of health. It is the spirit in which these changes are urged or opposed that creates the bitterness and partisanship which are to be deprecated."⁵⁰

Isaac Sharpless's fundamental belief in progress did not change but he felt in his later years that the altered spirit of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting no longer called as it once did for the preaching of the gospel of progress. In 1896 we find him, in an address as President of the Westtown Alumni Association, quoting Thomas Arnold's words: "The course of all evils in the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption that it is our duty to preserve and not to improve!" And to Westonians his own message at that time was given as follows: "And this one counsel only I have to give—in absolute loyalty to the purposes of Westtown, be not prudent over much. We are stunted and prescribed and dwarfed at every point by fears of possible results. We must take some risks, or we do

nothing and die of inanition. Our habit of mind is cautious in the extreme, and the wildest progressive among us is a very safe man in the world.”⁵¹

He continued to hold the view that Quakerism should be progressive. In 1909 he said, “Unprogressive Quakerism should be as much of an anomaly as a dark sun or a stagnant movement; a contradiction in terms.” Perhaps years of experience and responsibility may have modified his views as to the methods and speed of progress, but the change came primarily, I think, not in him, but in the mind and temper of the Yearly Meeting. Some twenty years after his Westtown address just quoted he observed a new atmosphere of liberalism among Friends and wrote: “In such an atmosphere almost any change is possible, and the problem of the day among us is not so much to create greater openness of mind as to steady the growth along lines in harmony with our fundamental ideas and habits of thinking so as not to break too radically with the past.”⁵²

He knew that there was more gold in the Quakerism of the past than the Society of Friends could afford to lose. “And we must not lose,” he said, “the old Quaker type of character, quiet, serious, sturdy, with a conscience which

was really operative, with a humility which never sounded its own praise, with a faith that never allowed the calls of opportunism or compromise to tempt it aside—the gentleman with convictions, with charity, with unselfishness, with perfect integrity. No finer product of spiritual nurture has been realized by anybody than the best products of the conservative Quakerism of the past * * * *. It is a type which noisy revivalism will never develop, which pure intellectualism cannot understand, which creaturely activity by itself will often destroy. It only comes by the gradual unfolding of the moral and spiritual faculties, begotten and evolved by the Spirit of God working in willing and obedient natures, destroying personal ambition, making dissimulation impossible, and practicing the presence of God in daily life.”⁵³

Toward the future he preserved a healthy optimism. In an article written in 1916, regarding past and present, after mentioning some of the alterations which were noticeable among Friends, he continued: “But the present tendencies are distinctly constructive. The destructive features are of minor importance, hence the whole body is going on in practical unity to a position which makes possible an earnest, well-considered, though as yet partially unconscious,

movement towards an adaptation to the work which the 20th century asks of us.

“Hence I cannot but feel encouraged. I cannot but see as the result of a rational faith, a reasonable program of practical endeavor and an increased religious earnestness within ourselves, a return to our fold of some of the thousands of the descendants of those whom the unwisdom of the past in these countries has driven from us and who have not found comfortable religious homes in other denominations. Growth in numbers without conviction amounts to nothing, but such growth as indicating a spread of the principles of Quakerism is everything. If some one could put into print the real meaning of the modern movement, how it attaches itself to the essentials of the religion of George Fox, how it can be made to work in this generation, how inspiring it ought to be to the generous hearts of our more earnest younger Friends, in language which would burn as well as inform, he would confer a benefit which could not well be estimated.

“Birmingham Meeting in its ancient haunts”—he was speaking in regard to his own old Meeting—“may disappear as many another meeting has gone, before the wave will reach it. But there may, too, be a resurrection here as signs

of it exist elsewhere. But though meetings may die yet the cause will live, and though we who are here to-night may not see it, yet the spirit of Quakerism borne by the willing self-sacrificing efforts of spiritually-minded men and women will yet have a future.

“Here is what they thought of it in 1684: ‘The majesty of truth is great here and does prevail and grow * * * Yea it will increase more and more to the ends of America. The day of its great visitation is come and his great power and authority is rolling hither like the inundation and breaking and overflowing of waters.’

“Well, the inundation so enthusiastically predicted did not come as they expected. They lived too soon in the history of the world to see it, and the humanity which embodied it was too weak and unwise to bring it about. But its spirit is marching on, and we who have anew caught its vision should see that a riper experience and a wider outlook give it a better opportunity.”⁵⁴

CHAPTER XIII

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

In 1915 Isaac Sharpless tendered his resignation as President of Haverford College. The circumstances made it a not unreasonable request. For almost thirty years he had labored unremittingly to build up the college and it now stood firm, prosperous and honored. He was reaching the age when men may fairly look for some relief from responsibilities. But the Board of Managers could not quickly adjust itself to the retirement of one upon whose strength and wisdom and leadership it had so long depended and its persuasion prevailed to win his consent that the resignation should be postponed.

The problems of college management in these latter years of his third decade as president wore different faces from those which confronted him when, at the age of thirty-nine, he entered into office. The disciplinary problem was no longer a bugbear which made life burdensome. "The attitude of the students to the college discipline,"

he wrote in retrospect, "had grown through stages of distrust, indifference, good intentions, to positive co-operation * * * *. The last few years of this time it was a positive pleasure to solve, together with the students, the problems of student conditions."⁵⁵

A vast change had taken place in the material prosperity of the College. The two or three buildings of 1887 had increased to a large group; an endowment of about \$200,000 had swelled to more than two and one-half millions. Among the latest gifts were two which provided for additions to the faculty, and in 1916, despite his years, his none too vigorous health and the perils of a voyage in wartime, he paid his last visit to England in search—though a vain search—for a professor of English Constitutional history.

Money and buildings were not now pressing for attention as in by-gone years. His thoughts could turn forward to the growing group of Haverfordians and to Haverford ideals. "I should much prefer when I turn over the College to my successor," he said to the alumni in 1913, "to have something to my credit in some other direction than in the number of buildings. I should like very much if all the Haverford faculty, and all the Haverford alumni, and all the managers, and the students, who are now, it

seems, in pretty happy unison with each other, should have established in their minds an idea as to what Haverford should be; that they should make up their minds, not that Haverford was to be the largest college of its sort; not that it should have the most extravagant buildings, but that it shall have a certain character of its own, and that it shall have such a set toward scholarship and high ideals of morality and character, that no future administration can possibly ever change it.”⁵⁶

In producing that harmony, to which he referred, among the various Haverford groups, managers, faculty, alumni, students, he himself was, perhaps, the greatest single factor. A man of lesser mold, with the prestige which was his in later years, might have magnified his own position and minimized the part played by others, but he saw each group, in its sphere, making its contribution, and with rare wisdom adapted himself to the conditions of each.

“The best sort of men to constitute a Board of Trustees,” he wrote, “are business and professional men of good judgment, themselves fairly educated, interested in education, and students of its problems. * * * * A board of uninterested men of wealth, as too many boards are, is no support to the President, except insofar as

they supply him with money * * * *. Too often a meeting of the Board, which in some cases occurs but once or twice a year, is occupied by routine business only, without illuminating discussion or a real comprehension of the problems to be solved." In his own person he largely filled in the outline which he wrote for the relationship between the ideal president and the board. "His main relation to them will be as a member of their board himself, which he should always be *ex officio*. He will in time, by his superior knowledge of the situation and its problems, with which he is in daily contact, become the most influential member and can usually direct their policies."⁵⁷

With tact he led his faculty, and their loyalty to him was the natural fruit of his interest in their welfare. One of the last important acts of his administration was his effort to secure for them a more satisfactory and secure tenure of office. For many years a large degree of individual satisfaction and cordial relations had been maintained without any particular system. Instructors and professors were appointed without any understanding as to term beyond one year and salaries were passed upon annually in the budget. The absence of any regulations or agreement to the contrary seemed to give the Board

the right to terminate a professor's service or reduce his salary at the end of any year.

No particular dissatisfaction came to a head under this order of things. But President Sharpless observed certain events and tendencies in the general world of education which led him to the conclusion that justice to the professors and the best interests of the college called for the granting of a greater security in office to the older men on the faculty. He noticed certain dismissals or attempted dismissals of professors in other institutions under unpleasant circumstances. He was aware of the tendency to accord faculties more responsibilities and more rights. His view was that the faculty should be looked upon as partners in the collegiate enterprise rather than as employees. "My own experience is that the faculty as a whole is quite competent to come to sensible decisions on any questions which are likely to arise. Individually they are often warped by their habits as students of a specialty, or lack of experience along business lines of work, but the tendency to make them trusted partners in all college affairs except the care of the endowment is entirely wholesome."⁵⁸

His proposal to the Board toward this end was practically that life tenure up to retirement age should be provided for full professors except in

case of clear moral or intellectual unfitness. This was not acceded to as fully as he would have wished but rules were passed providing for definite terms of appointments for members of the faculty ranking below a full professor, for an indefinite term in the case of full professors, and prohibiting discharges without a hearing before a joint meeting of the Board and a committee of the faculty.

In the alumni body he saw great possibilities for good or ill, and it was his policy to retain their interest, share the college problems with them, welcome their advice and seek to direct their influence to constructive ends. Sometimes, he knew from experience, alumni influence could be a hindrance. "Notwithstanding these blemishes," he wrote, "the alumni association is capable of much good, and in many cases has a most beneficial influence. Whether it is wise to introduce into governing boards any large elements whose responsibility is mainly to the alumni as now organized and conducted, and whose duty may be construed by themselves to consist in being agents for the extra class-room activities of the students may be doubtful. But that boards should seek among their alumni many members to fill vacancies is not open to question."⁵⁹

The relation which he conceived the president

should maintain toward the alumni, and which he, himself, exemplified was that of friendship, confidence and work for a common cause. "The purpose," and these are almost the final words of his *Story of a Small College*, "is to make the whole Haverford family, managers, alumni, faculty, and undergraduates, a loyal and interested democracy."

Not every man who has wrought a fine work has lived to see the results of his efforts, but to Isaac Sharpless it was given to behold the ripened fruitage of his ploughing and sowing. Looking back he could see his labor and its reward. There had been plenty of dull work but even that had its bright side. In one of his letters he remarked that "ability to do drudgery is a very great addition to one's resources. I have done a lot of it in my time and it has been a good thing for me." His was the satisfaction of a man who has done successful work in a useful and responsible position and has contributed something of lasting value to many lives and to the future. It is surely not assuming too much to believe that he expressed his own feeling when he wrote of the rewards which come to a college president: "The recognition of his value by many an old student is often unstintingly given, and he lives in the grateful memory

of many a man whose youth he has shaped. He is able to build his life into the life of an institution, sure that however long it may live and whatever changes may occur much that he has done will be lasting. Is there any better career for a man than to modify for good the life of a college, large or small? To see it grow in his hands from chaos to efficiency, from poverty to wealth, from low ideals to high? To note the changes as they, unconsciously to most of the students, shape themselves through his quiet influence into accord with his hopes and plans? To feel the increased confidence of patrons and the community and to know that it has an honest and reliable basis of character which fears no revelations of weakness or shams? To watch the growth of a cooperative, harmonious spirit in all the elements of college interests—is not this joy enough for any one's life?" "It is a fine thing for thee and for me," he once wrote to one of his children, "that we have a job on our hands, where we can put out our best work and feel sure that we have found a place in the world and can do something." "Blessed is he," says some one, "who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness."

The postponement of the resignation in which he had acquiesced at the solicitation of the Board

of Managers was only temporary. In the autumn of 1916 he called the faculty together and told them that he intended to retire. Within a few days there came to him a petition in which the professors stated their reasons for feeling that he should remain for at least another year. There was the unsolved problem of the Graduate School; and there was the matter of advancing entrance requirements. But now he felt the time had come for final decision. At the November meeting of the Board his resignation, to take effect on Commencement Day, in June, 1917, was offered and accepted.

In the last decade of his life as well as in earlier years he found time for other activities outside the College. Among these was his literary work. "It is difficult for me," he wrote in 1918, "to accede to the Editors' request to write about education. Forty years ago I had many ingenious and pregnant ideas on the subject, but some of them I have forgotten and others have been discarded. New ones have not developed in sufficient numbers to take their place. The trouble is that about the time a theory becomes well established, the utter failure of its results seems to bring it discredit."⁶⁰ Notwithstanding this late disavowal of ability to write on education there had been coming from his pen a con-

siderable number of articles on educational, historical and Quaker subjects, an occasional address, and three books.

In 1915 appeared his little book on *The American College*. In 1918 he writes to a friend: "I hope Winston is about getting out a 'Story of a Small College.' I have also a series of small biographies, based partly on the Pemberton letters, of Friends active in public life in Provincial Pennsylvania which will cause some loss of money to a publisher or myself." The final reference was to his last book, *Political Leaders of Provincial Pennsylvania*, published by Mac-Millan in 1919.

On the subject of war he had always held by conviction the position of Friends that war cannot be reconciled with the principles of Christianity and that the claims of Christianity must be given precedence over all others. In 1908 his active interest in the cause of peace had been manifested by an article written for one of the Friends' papers on War and Education. He had been interested, too, in the movement known as *The League to Enforce Peace*. With the coming of the World War he entered actively, without compromise, but with sanity and constructive outlook, into the difficult problems of those days. He wrote and spoke against war and military



HAVERFORD MEETING-GROUND IN THE BACKGROUND.

The Haverford Burial Ground, showing the grave of Isaac Sharpless. The resting place, also, of Principal Harlan, President Gummere, the late Doctor Francis B. Gummere and others.

training. When Philadelphia Yearly Meeting issued a statement of its position in 1917 it was he, who as a member of the Committee, urged the insertion of a sentence by which Friends declared that they *dedicated* themselves to the cause of peace. He accepted an invitation to debate with General Leonard Wood the issue of Military Training in Schools—though, ultimately, I believe, the General failed to appear. He felt deeply for the young conscientious objectors who suffered for their convictions and he gave hearty support, which included speaking and writing, to the work of the American Friends' Service Committee.

Character defies portraiture. A portrayal of the character of Isaac Sharpless should be simple, for in simplicity of life and spirit he walked with all men; it should be honest, for honesty dwelt in his eyes, on his lips and in his heart; it should be just for all his appraisals of men and deeds were fairly balanced by the even hand of justice; and it should have in it the warmth of sympathetic understanding for in him the warmth of friendship robbed justice of her coldness.

He was not an intense mystic; he was not one of the rare, spiritual seers; his was not one of

the mighty prophet voices kindling a new movement by the fire of its message. A leader he was but not one far removed from those around him; undemonstrative he was, austere he may sometimes have seemed, but the men and women who came in contact with him knew him as he was, simple, honest, just, and friendly. Once a young college president asked him what he considered the most essential quality for success in the position. "Honesty" was his reply. At the time of his death a friend said: "I think those of us who knew him best would be inclined to feel that that trait which made the most instant and permanent impression upon us was his extraordinary sense of justice. We always felt that whatever decision he might come to, whatever might be his conclusion, when he had arrived at it, it was certain to be fair and right. He was not swayed by emotion, he was not influenced by what was expedient, but he moved like a line of light straight on to what was right, and we felt about him as we feel about the elemental forces of nature. It belonged to his very nature to be just and right and fair—it seemed to us unerring and almost infallible."

Behind this justice and friendliness was power—intellectual power, keen, penetrating, logical thought; moral power, independence, persever-

ance, conscience and convictions. Even as a boy he exhibited the quality of independence in thought and action. Without pride in his own abilities he was not prone to seek advice. "I suppose," he wrote in a letter to one of his family near the end of his life, "I have had to do my work at Haverford without caring very much whether I had help or sympathy or not, and have depended on myself to get through. Hence I may have got into the way of assuming that I owed nothing to any one else and that they were equally indifferent. We are all working out things by our own methods and of course ought to help each other."

As he was not a frequent seeker of advice so he was not a ready giver of it. He felt that there was no school like experience, and that young people, as well as older ones, could learn better in that school than by attempting to follow lines laid down for them by others. To a young man he once wrote: "Thy suggestion at the end that I should give thee something of my experience regarding the philosophy of living, is one that I hardly like to respond to. For I have observed that followers of advice usually fall into trouble, and each man must evolve his own principles of action. The person that will not learn by his own thoughts and failures and successes is hope-

less. Tact and common sense, good intentions and earnest purpose, self reliance and dependence on Divine help are the best guides to conduct."

And in the same letter regarding perseverance: "Many people fail because they give up too easily. If an end is good, it can usually be reached. Practical difficulties often loom up, and nine people out of ten give up. But difficulties often vanish when they are bravely approached, and the tenth man is very apt to get through. The man who tries and tries by different approaches, to whom time is not an object, and opposition of friends and enemies only enheartens, who gets up after every throw the more determined to win, often does."

This rugged, though quiet, independence was not merely intellectual; it ran through to the very core of his moral nature. Conscience not expediency, convictions not popular opinion, were the stars by which he steered. "Happiness," he wrote to a daughter, "is something which mainly depends on internal conditions—conscience and stomach. If these are good everything bends to them and their possessor."

With these qualities went another which too seldom travels hand in hand with them—a liberal and tolerant spirit. "He who possesses an

enlarged and sedate mind will have great happiness" is a bit of old-world wisdom the truth of which I think Isaac Sharpless must have known.

His humor was indescribable. Humor always is. Like a sprite it tantalizingly eludes him who would capture it. But this undefinable quality which we call humor lighted up and shone through his whole personality. It gleamed in the twinkle of his eye, hid in the tiny wrinkles of his face, smiled out of the quizzical, little, one-sided quirk of his mouth, and chuckled in his, not boisterous, but thoroughly appreciative laugh. What made his stories, quietly told, and his comments, dryly expressed, so humorous? I cannot say. Perhaps he did not always know himself. Once at any rate he did not, for he wrote to his wife apropos of a speech he had made: "Brevity is the soul of wit and a perfectly sober remark of mine, which could be construed into an exceedingly good joke, was, much to my surprise, laughed at vehemently. It took me quite a while to see it myself."

An attempt to catalogue the traits of any man's character would be both futile and stupid. Such were some of the characteristics which Isaac Sharpless brought to his work and which were put into service by him in fulfilling his high sense that life is no mercenary pursuit of com-

fort or gain but an opportunity to help in making the world a better place in which to live. When his death came, quietly, after an illness, in January, 1920, one who had been his associate and friend for years put into words what many others felt:

"It needs no words from anyone to-day to make us realize and appreciate the full measure of the loss we have sustained.

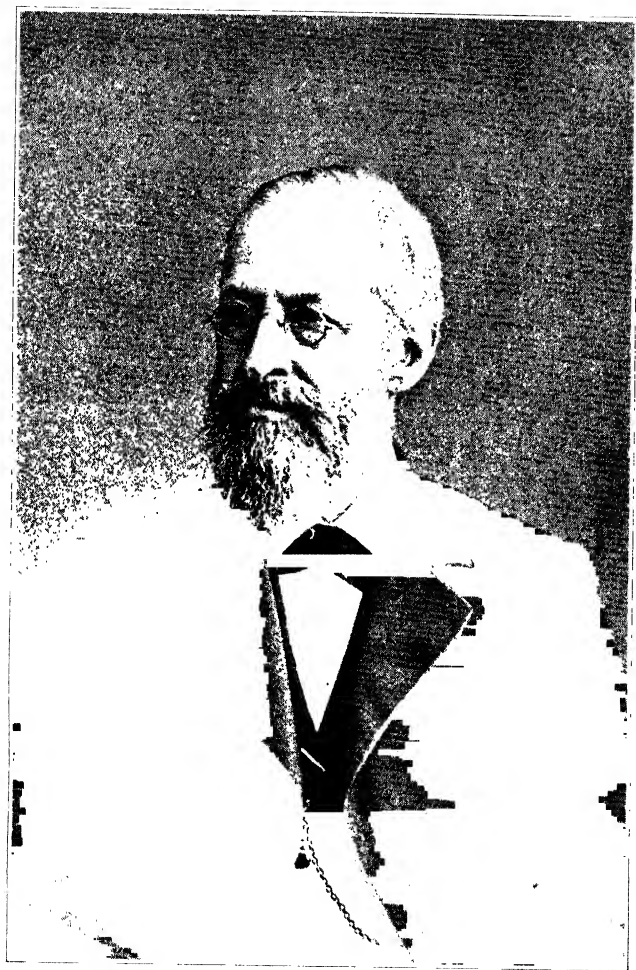
"Our own hushed hearts have already been telling us that. It means not only the passing of a beloved friend and outstanding personality from our midst, but it means in a very real sense the closing of an epoch. We shall date backward and forward from this as from a great divide in our lives. Somebody has said that common souls pay us with what they do, but noble souls pay us with what they are. Our dear friend has lavishly paid us in both these coins."

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PLINY EARLE CHASE.

PLINY EARLE CHASE

1820-1886

THE SCHOOLMASTER OF ERASMUS HALL

*Men have builded ships that ride the cloud
And brave the lightning; there are those like gods
Who have sown the darkened earth with starry light,
And curbed the invading waters of the sea;
But greater than these great, a man of men,
The Schoolmaster! For he has builded Youth.
Oh! never can the tempest rend the dreams
That he has launched across the mists of space,*

*Nor the black night engulf the hills of green
Whereon his flocks are pastured; all that time
Has given men will die, but only his,
The gift of Youth in long procession,
Can never pass—Youth with its eternal dream!*

*Our Master of Erasmus Hall—so long
Our Master—what have we to render thee
So precious as the life that thou hast wrought
For us? Thy daily bread of gentleness
Has fed our spirits, and the mellow wine
Of thy long sweet experience we have drunk.*



*And thy great strength, as quiet as the Tower
And like it, near the thunder and the stars,
Is ever shielding us—a watchful mind
That pierces the dark night, and hails the dawn.*

PLINY EARLE CHASE

I shall be glad to have the reader think of my father as still living in the "long procession" of "Youth" which he "builded"; so perchance may the one who turns these pages catch something of the fresh inspiration which has come to me in the compilation.

My father was named for his great uncle, Pliny Earle, of Leicester, Massachusetts. This uncle was a famous alienist, and likewise an extraordinarily handsome man. At one time, when travelling in England, he found at his hotel long lines of lackeys making him obeisance, as was only fitting for the Earl of Leicester. His hotel bill afterward proved large in proportion. My father carried the memory of such of his forebears as made a name for themselves, by right living and brilliant achievement, as he carried everything else in his life history, easily, graciously, with quiet humility. If he had been asked concerning his ancestors, he would have replied simply, "They were farmers."

Nobody ever heard him boast of springing

from the same stock as Walter Erle, the great Liberator whose struggles for Civil Liberty in England brought about results only second in importance to those of the Magna Charta; he was never known to be puffed up because of kinship to the Bulwer-Lyttons; he never claimed personal merit for selecting the doughty Ralph Earle, pioneer legislator of Rhode Island, as his maternal grandfather several times removed; he was not haughty with his neighbors because his father, Anthony Chase, was above suspicion as town treasurer of Worcester for more than thirty years, and held like standing for the same time as president of the Worcester Mutual Fire Insurance Company. I make just a guess that my father did feel satisfaction that his father was among those who organized and financed the New England lyceum system, the University Extension system of the times, and so prepared an opening for lecturers like Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

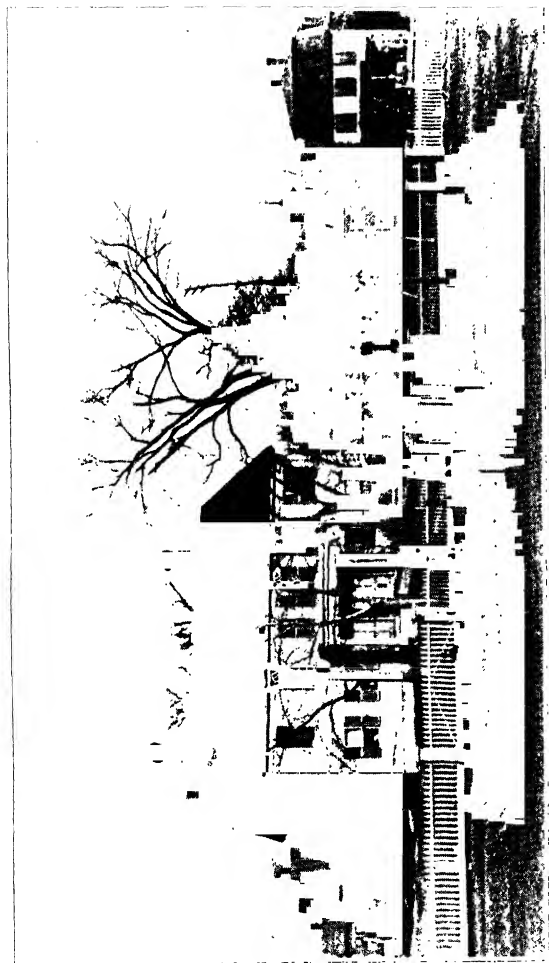
Under all circumstances, my father, in every sense of the word, lived up to the worst nickname his college-mates could call him, that of "The Gentleman." He was, in truth, an exceedingly gentle man but forceful withal. And this man of "The Gentle Heritage" was also so good a Quaker that he could always answer "clear"

to the formal query propounded from our discipline, "Are tale bearing and detraction discouraged among you?" He carried out literally the rule of the law courts, "Believe a man innocent until he is proved guilty." I remember, at one time, a slander against one of his students was mentioned in his presence, and I recall his immediate reply, "I heard something of the sort but I would not believe it." Because he believed the best of everyone, he brought out the best.

Again, my father had the happy faculty of putting everyone at ease in the presence of his great learning. It can be said of him what James Harvey Dillard said of Booker Washington: "This reminds us of his humility. There have been famous men who were not humble, but the great, good men who have lifted their fellows forward have all been humble-minded. Speaking of an early difficult position to which he was assigned, young Booker Washington said, 'At first I had a great deal of doubt about my ability to succeed.' A man who is really humble-minded does not talk of his humility, but there is a strain of humility which runs through 'Up from Slavery' although the book is, of course, about himself. 'I think the main thing,' he says, 'is for one to grow to the point where he completely forgets himself.' And this is the point where real suc-

cess begins. It was the forgetting of himself which led to Booker Washington's highest success. Chesterton is right when he says that 'humility is the most howlingly successful of the virtues.' Long before Chesterton it was said, 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' Speaking of this quality in Booker Washington, President Roosevelt said: 'To a very extraordinary degree, he combined humility with dignity and I think that the explanation of this extraordinary degree of success in a very difficult combination was due to the fact that at the bottom his humility was really the outward expression, not of a servile attitude toward any man, but of the spiritual fact that in very truth he walked humbly with his God.' "

My father's humility on the subject of his learning was often a silent rebuke to us children. We would go to him with a question, entirely sure that he could reply out of his own erudition; but he would walk quietly to the dictionary or encyclopedia and from that authority give us the answer required. This habit may in part account for his own vast stores of information. His early biographers have found it difficult to understand and estimate the extent of his learning; some say he had an acquaintance with more than a hundred languages and dialects, that he



THE BANCROFT HOUSE.

The birthplace of Pliny Earle Chase and his boyhood home. It stood on the present site of the Armory at the crossing of Salisbury and Grove Streets, Worcester, Mass.

could speak seven or eight languages fluently, and could write more than thirty with the aid of a dictionary. It is certain that he was one of the few scholars of his time who could read Eliot's Indian Bible. Languages were for him a mere amusement, as were botany, astronomy and higher mathematics. Ultimately, he made the teaching of philosophy the work of his mature years, but, as one of his early colleagues wittily remarked: "At Haverford, Pliny Chase did not occupy a chair, but a settee."

A gray haired man, now nearing his three score and ten, remarked recently in conversation that among the many pleasant recollections of his student days under my father, was one touching the latter's skill as a ready accountant. It should be remembered that this incident took place in the days before the adding machine, the days when the bank clerk who could be trusted to make a correct addition of a long column of figures was considered a great asset to a corporation. "The incident," said the narrator, "happened in class one day, when some of the more curious of us asked Professor Pliny if it were really true that he could add billions and trillions with the ease with which the rest of us could sum up the column of the units. Now, if one trait characterized our beloved teacher more

than another, it was an inborn modesty; he always disclaimed any power that would mark him off from his fellows. So in his usual quiet manner he met our question with, 'We had better continue our lesson.' This lesson chanced to be on Whately's Rhetoric, a subject as far removed as could be from the addition of long columns of figures. Trifling as the incident was, it left the class more curious than before; so, on a subsequent week, when the lesson for the day was well advanced, we put our query again. This time, Professor Pliny yielded to our persuasions. As I now recall it, his reply to us was, 'I used to be able to add rather formidable columns of figures; maybe I have lost the gift; suppose you try me.'

"He turned to the slate blackboard behind his desk, took up a crayon, and permitted us to dictate to him a row of figures, running, I think, into the trillions. Under these figures, others were placed at random until all the available space was covered with imposing looking numbers. There were eight or ten rows all given out haphazard. Then the teacher drew a horizontal line leaving just enough room below for the answer.

"He glanced at the board, paused a moment, crayon suspended, then beginning at the left, he

rapidly wrote down the answer. Of course, we of the group in front of him added away as fast as we could command our wits; but our teacher had finished his calculation, written his answer, and seated himself in his armchair long before we had completed the tedious operation we had prepared for our own undoing. The expression on Dr. Pliny's face was one of questioning solicitude lest we might charge him with a bit of vanity. His answer was correct in every figure, while ours had two errors, which, if this had been a bank transaction, would have involved a matter of more than a million dollars. We had heard of such feats of calculation before, but we had never seen the actual performance. We put to him the natural question, 'How much practice has been required to perfect this rare power?' His naïve and modest reply, in substance was, 'I always enjoyed playing at this game when I was a boy, and I soon grew to consider numbers in millions and billions as my brother and cousins considered units. I know of nothing that should preclude your doing more than I have done, if you had begun as I began.' So ended our experiment in testing Dr. Pliny's magical power with numbers; but, as I recall the incident, the members of our class, at the dinner table that day, had a new topic for discussion."

Concerning the Arithmetic which my father compiled in conjunction with Horace Mann, it is fair to say that it revolutionized the style of arithmetical text-books used in the schools of that day. It has long since been superseded by others which belong to a complete series of mathematical text-books, but it is doubtful if class book teaching of arithmetic will ever cease to reflect some of the ideas of arrangement, etc., introduced by the two great scholars, Horace Mann and Pliny E. Chase.

Lest the reader be surprised at my estimate of the far reaching impression made by my father's mathematical text-books, I print here the criticism of Dr. Thomas Hill, former President of Harvard University. He writes as follows: "Chase's Arithmetic was the best I ever saw. The two books of Chase, and Chase and Mann, as we called them, were worth all other arithmetics I ever saw put together. When I first introduced Chase into the public schools of Waltham, I had a hard battle with the committee and with the teachers. They thought it too difficult, etc., but in less than one year all were satisfied, and at the end of three years all were enthusiastic. No school in Massachusetts, and I believe none in the world, equaled our Waltham schools in arithmetic. But the publishers sold the plates

to a Boston firm, who had another and an inferior book to push, and they melted up the plates of Chase to my intense indignation." Dr. Hill regarded the text-books, not as compilations like the common run of arithmetics, but "as original contributions to pedagogy, akin to those of Pestalozzi."

Because of his quaint expression, his modesty, and his confidence in his theories, a friend pleads with me to let my father here speak for himself, that is—to insert a quotation from the unique preface to his *Common School Arithmetic*. His introduction reads in this fashion: "The author submits his work with confidence to those teachers who are already acquainted with his *Elements of Arithmetic*; he solicits an impartial examination. If the book be such as he believes it to be, he would gladly see it introduced into general use, but he has no wish that it should be employed in the place of better works, or that it should be retained a moment to the disadvantage of the pupils of any school."

My father was not a writer of many books; but he was a member of many scientific societies, and he gave of his best in the writing of brief treatises on various phases of scientific research as they happened at the time to be uppermost in his mind.

I may say in passing that he married young; he was not more than twenty-three at the time. With a devoted wife and a family of three boys and three girls, and with but a modest patrimony, it was absolutely necessary that he be a bread-winner as well as become a scientist. His own tastes were reflected in those of his children; and, while these tastes were reasonably modest, they required the outlay of money, and it was a joy to him to cultivate and satisfy the demands. He counted it no cross to interrupt the gratification of his own personal inclinations, and to give the early years of his married life to the prosaic occupation of supplying the home needs and comforts. How he ever found time during the years from 1851 to 1886 to enter so profoundly into scientific and linguistic research will always remain a mystery to his children. Never a word of regret passed his lips that he could not devote his full strength to the pursuit of the subjects which so fascinated him. He made every sacrifice conceivable, but like the true Christian that he was, he lived a day at a time, and crowded the daylight hours with labor at his store, his school or his college; but the evenings and far into the nights were given to some absorbing topic of philosophical or psychological research. Yet we children were never al-

lowed to know how busy our father was. He had assumed the responsibility of parenthood, and he placed, with our dear mother, the home first, and above all else it became and always continued to be the centre of his affection, the real first interest of his life.

It is a joy to me to record, as one of that little circle of growing children, that my father was rarely too busy or too self-centred with his literary work, to spend the choicest part of the "after supper" as a member of the family about the lighted lamp. He was able to carry on his most abstruse calculations with us of the younger generation playing noisily about him. If we played a game, he was a real figure to be counted upon; I think his enjoyment was almost as keen as our own. He was fond of all games requiring intellectual skill, and he always left the rest of us far behind in our competition with him. He was clever as possible at Crambo, where the answer to a question is rhymed, and brings in three or more indiscriminate words drawn at random. The small compass into which he could bring all this was phenomenal; I can hear now his happy chuckle at thus winning out over his opponent. Some of the games we played were of his own devising. One of his hobbies was psychical research. This was in the early years

of the Psychical Research Society in England. Along this line he invented a game in which he would have us turn up cards for him to guess their signatures; he would then calculate the number of times his guesses had been right. Was this a forecast of the present day tendency in scientific experiments to make use of the Law of Probabilities?

He was exceedingly fond of music. This led him to give my older sister, Eliza, a piano; likewise to pay for lessons that she might cultivate her gift of a rare singing voice. Such independence of judgment on his part led to his being suspended from membership in the Society of Friends. But, for several reasons, the suspension proved only temporary: first, he was ever loyal to the essentially basic principles of Friends; second, he had always given valuable service in the Haverford College Meeting; third, his counsel was much needed in the meetings of the Executive Boards of Haverford and of Bryn Mawr College. Taking it by and large, the Trustees deemed it wise to invite him back into the fold. When he was asked to come back into membership, he replied with sweet tranquillity, "I have never been out of it." It may be, he remembered with quiet amusement that in the early years of his course at Harvard, which he

entered at the age of fifteen, he had formed the habit of getting himself suspended. There are still preserved in the archives of the Chase family two letters, so old that the "Veritas" is almost obliterated from the seals with which the President of Harvard secured his official documents. In these letters, President Josiah Quincy (recall his imposing statue now in Memorial Hall!) has the painful duty to inform Anthony Chase, Esq., that the latter's son, Pliny Earle, has been suspended with added punishment—this because on one occasion he has been found guilty of cracking English walnut shells in chapel, and on another, he has so missent a snowball aimed at a freshman, that he has hit a distinguished speaker while the latter was conducting morning prayers for the assembled student body. We have reason to be glad that after these occasions, as in later years, he was "invited back into membership," and kept on distinguishing himself in better ways. In the year of the snowball episode, when he was barely sixteen, he had been admitted to a class in advanced mathematics, been allowed to join the first group of young astronomers in Harvard who made observations on shooting stars, and had even been accepted as a contributor to American and foreign scientific periodicals. Perhaps that snow-

ball episode was absolutely necessary to keep the balance of his life true against precocity.

This discussion of my father's suspension habit has carried us far afield from the important history of the family piano. I should add here that my sister came of age during the period of tension with the meeting; she promptly took upon her shoulders the sinful burden of the ownership. There is no denying that the experience made a deep impression on our whole family life. We kept the piano, but we used it conscientiously for our own improvement and uplift; and we always bore in mind that we were not to make it a possible "snare" for the students who came to our home.

Of my father's social contacts, much that is humanly interesting might be written. My parents, during their early married life in Philadelphia, boarded with Abolitionists and Liberals. Many of their associates belonged to the Unitarian church of Dr. William H. Furness, father of the famous Shakespearean scholar, Horace Howard Furness. Among others of this circle were Prof. J. Peter Lesley, his wife, "the Lady from Philadelphia" of Lucretia Hale's popular Peterkin stories, and their children, Mary and Meg. To this group properly belonged, also, Edward Everett Hale, Prof. Lesley's intimate



JAMES EDWARD OLIVER AND PLINY EARLE CHASE.

friend and my father's former classmate at Harvard. May it not be that the love of fellowship, so pronounced in the characters of some of my father's children, owes its early impetus to the social contacts in these charming circles surrounding their formative years? The Annual Meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science were another source of stimulation for us all. I recall one such brilliant meeting held at Awbury, the beautiful Cope Estate, part of which has since been deeded to the city of Philadelphia for an Arboretum.

Another circle from whose influence our family felt the uplift was that of the Faculty of Cornell University, in which my mother's brother, James Edward Oliver, was, for a quarter of a century, head of the Department of Mathematics. A strong and tender friendship of the Damon and Pythias sort existed, over all their mature years, between my father and my uncle. A pencil sketch of the brothers-in-law, seated side by side, and head to head, in their steamer chairs, was made by my sister Harriet, during the outward bound voyage when we crossed together for a vacation trip to Europe in the summer of 1883. We still own the picture with its inscription: "Two heads with but a single thought—two hearts that beat as one."

This was true in the deeper sense, but superficially, they would argue on ultimate questions by the hour, day and night, and never come to any conclusion more definite than, "Yes, but—." My uncle was fearlessly radical, but my father loved to find agreement between the latest scientific hypothesis and Holy Writ; he inclined always toward the fundamentalist side of an argument. Favorite themes for his written and spoken word, especially in later years, were The Lord's Prayer, Thy Will Be Done, The Creative Week, and Let There Be Light.

All things considered, I am glad my father was spared the present day fundamentalist—modernist controversy. And yet, as a vision of his sweet calmness under all circumstances comes before me, I think I know exactly how he would have taken it: "Truth is eternal; above all controversy over it; one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The same philosophy was taught by Nereus Mendenhall, John H. Dillingham and Pliny Chase. This was their summing up of the matter: "This controversy has always been waged." They agreed in their conclusions that the Bible manuscripts have come down to us through very human instruments; the books were transcribed in the seclusion of monasteries, where, it is evi-

dent to scholars, they have undergone many alterations; they are of inestimable value in the complexities and problems of human life; but the manifestations of the Divine Light to the individual can alone be our ultimate guide and authority. If he were now alive, my father would surely grieve to know that in parts of this land, nominally pledged to free speech and religious liberty, there are efforts to shut out certain aspects of truth from the rising generation, from the young torch bearers to whom we must entrust the search in which he was an ardent and fearless seeker.

When we come to writing of my father's scientific activities, we are on debatable ground. It would be out of place and quite uninteresting to give a list of the topics discussed by him in his scientific papers. Just the enumeration of a few will satisfy the reader that he ventured far into matters too profound for most of us to follow. A friend has told me that during his time at Haverford, the early '80s, my father's favorite study was what he chose to call the "Music of the Spheres." Just what he meant by this I can scarcely explain; but he thought he saw a relationship between the orbits of the celestial planets and the musical scale which warranted the scientific hypothesis that, were our ears at-

tuned to celestial harmonies, we should hear with a keen delight the music made by the planets as they move in space around the sun. It was, at least, a bold surmise. Did his theory rest, not in Job, or Plato, or Shakespeare, but on some foundation of scientific data?

From among his papers, most of them published in the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society and the Journal of the Franklin Institute, I have selected these few titles, somewhat at random:

Amer. Philosoph. Soc. No. 11—The Chase-Maxwell Ratio.

Amer. Philosoph. Soc. No. 89—Possible Vowel Sounds not Used in any Language.

Amer. Philosoph. Soc. No. 99—Relations of Chemical Affinities to Luminous and Cosmical Energies.

Amer. Philosoph. Soc. No. 22—Component Elements of Normal Barometric Tides, Influence of Oscillations moving with the velocity of Light.

Amer. Philosoph. Soc. No. 81—The Philosophy of Christianity.

Philosophical Magazine No. 4—Our Binary Star and its Attendants.

Franklin Inst. Journal No. 9—Elementary Phyllotaxy and Spectral Harmony.

One who knew my father well; whose judg-

ment, however, was not to be warped either by love for him as a man, or by admiration of his intellect, wrote of him the year after his death: "This much may be said of Professor Chase's investigations: Whatever may be the ultimate conclusions of science as to the precise nature and extent of evolution, there has been an evolution from the simple and more comprehensive conditions of matter into the more complex and uniform. It is reasonable to suppose that this entire evolution has been in accordance with some general law. The discovery of that law is probably within reach of the human mind.

"It was after this law that Professor Chase was searching; the character of his mind was one that eminently fitted it for the investigation, and future researches may show his work to have been founded in fact, and correct in inference, and that he was in advance of his age and above the heads of his critics. The respect in which his writings have been held in Great Britain has been attested by their publication in the *Philosophical Magazine*. His essay on the 'Numerical Relation between Gravity and Magnetism' received, in 1864, the Magellanic Premium from The American Philosophical Society.

"The detached and fragmentary character of his scientific productions, their real profundity,

and the limited number of those who could follow him in his rapid evolution of thought on these subjects, have led many scientific men to regard his speculations with doubt, and some who had little or no personal acquaintance with their author, accord them no scientific value. But Professor Chase was least of all a hypocrite or a charlatan, and those who knew him best will most unhesitatingly recognize his deep sincerity. He was a humble seeker after truth, with the lamp of a strong intellect. The obscurity of his logic belongs not altogether to the writer but to his theme. There was nothing obscure about his ordinary style. When he wrote upon familiar topics, it was clear and cogent, rising sometimes into flights of eloquence. It is to be regretted that he has not himself been able to put into compact and comprehensible form his studies in atomic and molecular forces as applied to astronomical and interplanetary relations, and no less profound, though fragmentary notes which his mind threw off in later scintillations. But they were not completed, and though much more than gropings after the facts of infinity, cannot lay claim to perfect and final demonstration. Whatever title his name has to rank among the greatest on the rolls of science, no one who knew his work will deny him an eminent place."

Going farther along the same line of thought, a student of my father's in the '70s, a man of ripe religious experience in the years which have followed, has expressed himself on this wise: "Pliny Chase of Haverford College, a very deeply scientific man, and with it all, a very devout, spiritual Christian, said nearly fifty years ago, that if he were called upon to express an opinion as to which of the two was real and which only seemed to be real, the spiritual or the material, he would be obliged to say that he believed the spiritual has the real existence, and the material only seems to be. Professor Chase said also at about the same time, that he believed light to be the medium used by the Creator to maintain the balance of the universe, as when a meteorite falls upon the earth and increases the weight of the earth, equilibrium has to be restored, and God, who created and who maintains the earth and the heavens, uses light as His agency for maintaining the equilibrium. Professor Chase seems likewise to have been a forerunner, by a half century, of the atomic theory of modern research which makes each atom a little solar system in itself, thus tracing back to light as the common source of all forces."

I cannot leave this phase of the subject without adding the tribute of one who was closely

associated with my father at Haverford for a long period of years and who, during this time, had come to know his unusual mental abilities. He writes; "Professor Chase belonged to that class of philosophers who are ahead of their times, men who see, though it may be imperfectly and dimly, very deeply into the relation of things, and whose speculations, like those of the Marquis of Worcester, though misunderstood and perhaps even unintelligible to contemporaries, contain truths grasped and accepted by future generations."

I have omitted the mention of a great honor which came to my father in 1864. Since 1786, the American Philosophical Society has had at its disposal the Magellanic Fund, the gift of an Englishman, for the purchase of a gold medal to be awarded annually, under prescribed terms, to the author of the best discovery or the most useful invention relating to navigation, astronomy or natural philosophy (mere natural history being excepted). The award has been made only four times within one hundred and forty years. The first medal waited nearly twenty years for a claimant; it went to Benjamin Smith Barton for a paper on "Some Pernicious Insects in the United States"; the second, in 1864, just sixty years later, was awarded to Pliny Earle

Chase; in 1887, more than twenty years after, the third was given to Lewis M. Haupt for discoveries touching "The Physical Phenomena of Harbor Entrances"; while the fourth and last in 1922, after a lapse of thirty-five years, rewarded two men alike, Paul B. Heyl and Lyman J. Briggs, for their invention of the Earth Inductor Compass.

Among my father's papers is a letter written by him and addressed to George B. Wood, President of the American Philosophical Society. It explains, in language not profoundly scientific, the nature of his treatise on "The Discovery of Certain New Relations between the Solar and Lunar Diurnal Variations of Magnetic Force and Barometric Pressure," which won for him the Magellanic Premium. One page is filled with mathematical formulae in which he used to delight, but which to me have ever remained much as they were in my school girl days, something for me to pass over.

I have come upon the following statement and without knowing its source, I feel free to give it, for I believe it to be a fair estimate of my father's position in the realm of scientific research. "He was a genius in that he followed no man's lead, many of his visions may be only dreams, but to those competent to judge, he had a versatility of

genuine knowledge based on personal research which entitled him to the high position he held among scientific investigators of his time. Of nearly two hundred papers contributed by him to various learned bodies, the larger number of them to the American Philosophical Society, not more than one-tenth were philological, and the remainder were mostly in meteorology, cosmics, and physics. Many of these were fragmentary—studies, as it were, of great themes—and in undigested groups; they were unfinished, like Michael Angelo's marble groups, and needed the master's hand to give them the perfect expression intended. As he grew older, they took more and more a cosmical direction, and his mind struggled to demonstrate from the harmonies of the universe, as the geologist does from the marvellous narrative of the rocks, a cosmical evolution. Going back to the very sources of development, with daring genius, he sought through proofs of the 'quantitative equivalence of the different forms of force which we call light, heat, electricity, chemical affinity, and gravitation' and original theories of nodal accumulation, the truth of which time may affirm."

My father, as I have already intimated, led a very busy life. His first teaching was in a district school at Leicester, Massachusetts, when he



The Haverford home of Pliny E. Chase and family, during all the time he was Professor at the College. It stands in a beautiful grove of forest trees, a little back from the Maple Drive.

was just from Harvard, at the age of nineteen. Four years later, he married Elizabeth Brown Oliver, at Lynn, Massachusetts. She was but a few months his junior. For several years following his marriage, he was actively engaged in the manufacturing business, but he never ceased to long for the life he preferred, that of a teacher, and before his engagement at Haverford College, he had passed many years at his chosen calling. In 1866, at the age of forty-six, he finally gave up his connection with his business enterprise, and from that time until his death in 1886, he was almost continuously engaged in school and college work.

He made two trips to Europe; travel had its charm for him, but he found in the libraries of Europe and in personal contact with scholars whom he had known by reputation and through correspondence, a satisfaction and a pleasure which very few can have.

In estimating the value of the life of such a man as my father, some one has said it reminds him of the language used by Dr. Arnold's pupils: "His students were his monuments." Very precious to the few remaining members of his family are the letters received by some of them from those who, years ago, were school and college boys under his care. While a number of these

letters are too personal in character to quote, some are sufficiently general in their treatment to permit me to share them here, and I know of no better way to give a true picture of the outstanding traits of my father's character.

The letters I have before me come from California, Honolulu, New England and the South. Many States in the Union are included in the list. Among them, a student of 1878, writing from Honolulu says: "When I entered Haverford, Professor Chase was newly installed at the College, so there was a certain freshness to the stories of his remarkable gifts. I think what I now remember as vividly as anything, after the passage of all the years, is the way in which his face would light up in any discussion of philosophical or religious questions. This flushing of the countenance gave to his face a sort of hallowed or beatific expression that was most inspiring." Another, who for many years has held an important post in one of the leading colleges on the Pacific Coast has written: "Dear Friend: I carry in my mind a very definite picture of thy father. It is of a man already elderly, of great charm of manner, of infinite patience and of one whose every act and word seemed to bring with it an aroma of goodness and gentleness. We must have tried him often

with our crude ideas, crudely expressed, but I never saw him impatient, never heard a harsh word uttered by him. All was permeated by a spirit of measureless kindness, and good will. I think the influence upon the thoughtful ones among us students was very potent. He was an example of what the scholar should be—earnest, profoundly thoughtful, candid, patient and reverent; and more than that, we felt the deep influence that a *good* man always exerts even unconsciously: we knew him for a Christian gentleman. In matters of discipline, we could see how the heedlessness and foolish pranks of the boys pained him, and I think there was not one among us all who was not sorry to cause this pain to one so well-loved.”

Another appreciation comes from one who was not his student; but who, as a little girl on the Haverford Campus, often met him on his rambles, and who recalls with keen appreciation the hand clasp or the pat on the shoulder as he passed a word of good cheer. She says: “I have a vivid memory of Pliny Chase standing in the gallery of Haverford Meeting. It was the year in which there were marvellous sunsets; night after night the western sky was a blaze of glory. On that First-day morning there was peace without as the sunlight sifted through the branches

of the old trees; peace within, as he stood there, the aged scholar with the simple faith of a little child, the calm faith of one who had proved the love of his Heavenly Father through many years. He repeated 'At Eventide there shall be light.' A sense of calm, deep, abiding faith was imparted by the quiet voice, the strong face, the spoken words of the sermon that followed. And ever since that morning so long ago, this memory has given me a feeling of safety and of the eternal quality of God's love."

Again comes this message from beyond three mountain ranges, the estimate of a man who has touched shoulders with some of the choice spirits of the century. He too is modest, but I cannot but believe that he has placed his finger upon that in my father's life which made him an inspiration to so many: "Professor Pliny E. Chase held the profound respect of all his students. He held a unique place in their regard, because of his strong Christian character, his profound scholarship in many fields, his constant courtesy and helpful, friendly spirit. His mental grasp was so broad, we frequently found ourselves beyond our depth in trying to follow; but his patience was equal to meeting the need, and preserving us from sinking. No one had more influence in the formation of high ideals than

he. I am greatly indebted to him for his helpfulness in my own life."

Exactly in accord with this testimonial is another from one close at home. "Those of us who were members of the first class that came under the influence of Pliny Earle Chase for the whole course at Haverford College, look back on him as a dear friend and an inspiring instructor. We were all at once impressed with the universality of his knowledge. It was our claim indeed that he knew everything, and although we tested out the proposition on every occasion, we never had reason to abate the claim. Some of us were inclined at first to take advantage of his patience and good nature, but such triflers were soon won by his fairness and sweetness of character, and he obtained the full respect and love of us all. It is a pleasure, after half a century, to revive the memory of one so kindly, so wise and so unassuming."

Still another letter which I prize highly comes from a man who, since his days at college, has given the best years of his own life to teaching. In the logical manner that is characteristic of him, he records how deep was the imprint made upon his mind by my father; he writes: "The extraordinary powers of Professor Pliny Earle Chase in personal influence on the Haverford of

his day would doubtless yield many explanations, as one or another of the 'Boys' who came under its spell were called upon to express themselves. This very fact indicates his versatility. To use a figure of speech, he had a pass-key that unlocked even the enigmatic characters among his students. The outcome of this rare gift was a feeling of love actually approaching reverence. The most lawless of the young barbarians hesitated to inflict their pranks upon him. All would agree that he was in the Mark Hopkins class. He made college life—the background of it, the spirit of it—an unconscious participation in the spiritual wealth of mankind. Looking back through the vista of forty years, one is tempted to make some analysis of this remarkable influence. Three points at least would find general acceptance. First, although Professor Pliny Chase was widely known as a great scholar, there was none of the arrogance of learning about him. Even if one approached him for the translation of a Chinese inscription, his attitude was, "Come, let us see if *we* can unravel it.' Always thus, without condescension, he put himself on the platform of a common understanding. Second, his approach, even in the class room, was the personal approach. He taught the individual boy, who, for the moment,



A family group with the home in the background.

was his especial friend; and so gave him confidence. He thus demonstrated what modern pedagogy has magnified, the relation between feeling and intellect.

"Third, his life in the college, in the home and in society did actually mediate 'The Presence.' All was done as in 'the great Task-master's eye.' Unconsciously, his students were saying, 'If one of such great parts finds his meat and drink in these higher realms, why not we?' In a word, therefore, the crown of this extraordinary life—the secret of this extraordinary power—was humility."

How impressive it is to me as I copy these expressions to realize that the words of Theodore Roosevelt concerning Booker Washington are verified again and again concerning my father.

The following word picture of my father in the class room, I fancy, is very true to life; it is drawn by one who knew him as student and fellow teacher: "There often comes before me the memory of a man who had wonderful power in shaping the lives of boys, though he taught without any pre-conceived method, and gave little thought to theories of teaching. I am but one of many young men who often sit in quiet moments, and think with joy and reverence on the fortunate hours spent in that class room,

in Founders' Hall, where Pliny Chase used to sit, his chair slightly tipped from a perpendicular, his forefingers and thumbs brought closely together, as he emphasized his points with his hand, and asked his questions, and smiled his inimitably sweet smile. Patiently he listened to our illogical answers and nodded, saying, 'That will do for thee,' and finally drew his own deep conclusion to the same question. Perhaps none of us has ever told or ever can tell exactly in what his power lay; what one thing above another we admired in him then or reverence in him now. We knew he would not be very stern with us, if our answers failed to make connection with his questions; we knew he was quite likely to ask us to recite on any topic we remembered in the lesson, and if we remembered something already spoken of, he would listen with much more interest to its repetition than would the class; we felt sure that if we fell into his hands for our short-comings or far-goings, we should have them pardoned on the ground that thoughtlessness and not viciousness had prompted them.

"No, it is not for those things, however much we enjoy recalling them, that we loved Pliny Chase, nor was it exactly because he was so eminent as a scholar, that we respected him, although we were proud of him for that. It was

because he possessed to such a degree the qualities that join to make up an ideal Christian scholar, and that he was alive to the deepest needs of young men just entering the mazes of life. In his long life of study, research, and meditation, he seemed to have found 'the secret which the ages had kept.' There he stood, ready to inflame the young aspirant whose unused eye was just beginning to see the meaning in the mystic scroll. He possessed the rare gift of making lofty and pure things attractive, and I doubt whether any student ever came really under his influence without having the goal of his life changed. Others have wrought out more accurate students, others have known far more than he of the technique of instruction and government; but I have never heard of any one who more *ennobled students*, made the *base seem baser*, or the *good better* than he. While living he won our love, and now that death has removed him, and time made our mental picture of him faultless, we find in our dull road this shining track.

'In every nobler mood
We feel the orient of his spirit glow,
Part of our life's unutterable good,
Of all our saintlier aspirations.' "

Another, writing from an eastern city and a

great university where he has for years acceptably filled the chair of Greek language and literature, says:

“As my mind runs back to the Haverford of the ‘seventies,’ I visualize a small group where students and faculty combined were fewer in number than the teaching force of even a minor college of today. And yet that small faculty was a constellation in our firmament, and Pliny Chase was our pole-star. We loved him. The indulgent, kindly light in his deep, wise eyes—his only reproof for the foolish pranks of youth—was a sufficient recall to nobler interests. We had a profound respect for the range of his knowledge. In consequence of the exacting demands made upon a small teaching force, who must needs cover the whole contemporary field of human knowledge—wide enough even in the more limited curriculum of those early days—he taught us various disparate subjects, ranging, for example, from ethics to geology. But in none of them were we ever conscious of any lack in the breadth of vision, in clarity of explanation, nor of any indifference to the *realia* of truth. His ethical pronouncements were never narrow. We felt that the coined gold of his measured words might well be accepted at their face value in other realms beyond our solar system—‘our

little systems' might 'have their day and cease to be,' but their 'broken lights' reflected somehow 'the centre and sun of every sphere.'

"When it came to geology, in addition to the hard, stony facts, necessary for grasping the elements of a great science, he made us also see the majestic processional of the uncounted myriads of years since 'Creative Mind first strake the world out of Chaos.' Though didactic sermonizing was utterly foreign to his mind, sermons did emerge, spontaneously, from stones. With the exaggeration of youth we thought, in fact, that he knew everything, although the humility, generated of great learning, was perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of his attitude of mind. 'Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers' is a formula not easily digested by undergraduates confident in their own ready-made wisdom but we did have, in his presence, enough modesty to believe that he had under his control both the facts and the best, even if tentative, interpretation thereof.

"To some of us, at least, he was guide, philosopher and friend. There was no barrier to prevent our bringing to him any problem, simplex or complex. Young men, if they think at all, are relentlessly eager for the real answers to the riddles of life. They are not satisfied with make-

shifts. They are determined to have the 'Truth cash down upon the counter.' I remember that one of us once went to Pliny Chase with no less a problem than the eternal riddle, existing alike for science and for theology—the flat contradiction between 'Necessity and Free Will.' His boyish mind, wrestling with this ancient riddle, had reached an *impassé*. If God is omniscient, He foresees the future, already mapped out in detail, for every man. No one, therefore, can change a single item. The master's wise eyes became like a deep well, where even at noonday one may see the undismayed reflection of the ever-shining stars. He said at once (the problem was not new to him) "Yes, but if God is omniscient, He is also omnipotent; He may *choose* not to foresee a man's decisions, and thus, after all, a man is a free agent.' Afterward to this same student, William James gave a different solution, a purely pragmatic one. 'The contradiction,' he said, 'exists. There can be no reconciling of the two truths. A man, therefore, *must* choose one or the other, as his working formula of life. I,' he added, 'chose Free Will long ago. I have never regretted my choice.' Those brave words of the great pragmatic philosopher saved life once more, for his hearer, from intellectual degradation. Yet the solution suggested by Pliny Chase

still seems more profound. It, at least, points the way to an ultimate reconciliation of finite contradictions in the realm of the infinite."

A western lad felt the influence of my father, so he says, as soon as he set foot on Haverford soil. This is the style in which he records the experience; he, himself, having in the interval grown to the headmastership of one of the principal Boys' Schools in a large American city; he writes, "No man was more modest than he, but that very fact rather enhanced our admiration and respect for him, both as a man and as a teacher. I suspect that Diogenes lighted his candle to look for a man, not so much because there was a scarcity of men, as because he felt cramped in *his* tub. He began to realize that a tub was not a suitable dwelling place for a gentleman. Just so, we crude Western boys were beginning to discard our tubs. We also lighted our candles and found not only a man, but the man of our imagination in Professor Chase. To quicken the imagination, to widen the moral and spiritual vision, to give a deeper insight into and a truer estimate of values, really worth while in life,—this is the function of the true teacher. Pliny Earle Chase did all these things for those of us who were willing to listen. Perhaps no higher tribute can be given to any man."

Again from the Southland comes the following picture. (One does not need to read between the lines to gather the impress that this one life, through others, has made on thousands of the youth in the great Commonwealth of North Carolina): "In philosophy, he was familiar with all the leading thinkers, both ancient and modern. He was not carried into the materialism of much of the current belief of that day. 'Tyndall's Belfast Address' made considerable stir and led to much discussion. But in the judgment of Professor Chase, Plato could not be set aside!

"A course of instruction which he gave us as elective, using Krauth's Berkeley as a text book, was full of inspiration and clearness and charm of interpretation; by aid of which your mind, even if bent toward the current materialistic explanations, would easily make its way back to a saner idealism,—saner, that is, than you had before, and saner also than the materialistic explanation. He was never afraid of being led astray by truth. He believed in man's power to know the truth, and that by the truth we might be made free.

"Professor Chase was always friendly and cordial, unafraid of modern science, a staunch believer in the Christian religion, and an able and faithful exponent of Quaker foundations; never

narrow, never condemnatory of other philosophers' opinions; safe in counsel, warm in sympathy, hope and faith.

"What fervency of spirit pervaded his addresses, especially his address to a graduating class! Nothing was more appealing than his short talks to a single class, most of all as we drew near to the end of our course. In the closing days of 1876, Professor Chase, concerned for our welfare and prosperity, in a brief talk, gave us something of the grounds of religious belief and faith. This was doubly impressive, because we knew every word came from one who, in breadth of knowledge and affectionate interest, was our friend, our beloved teacher and companion. I have known nothing finer than this kindly sympathetic address. He repeated to us the hymn by Theodore Monod:

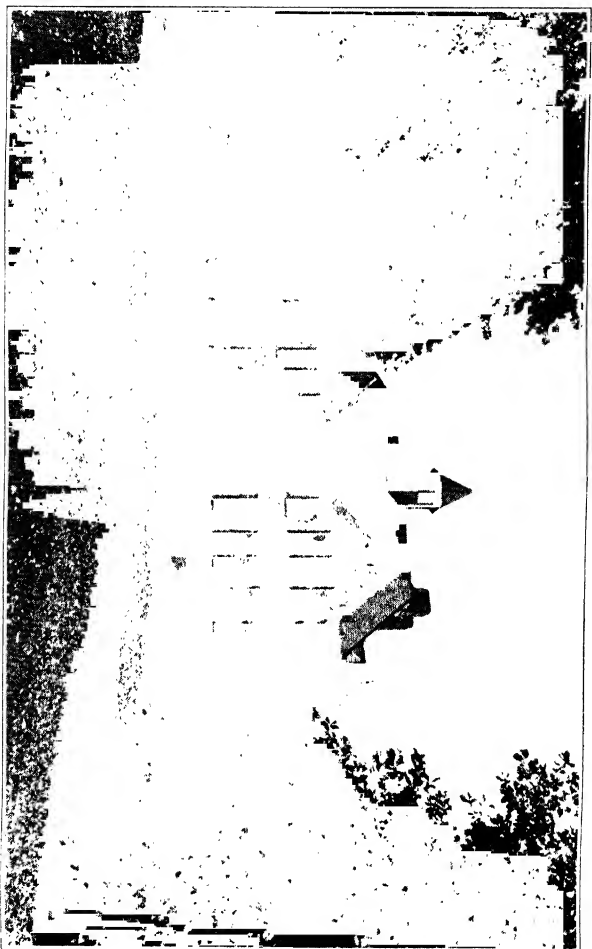
Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
"All of self and none of Thee!"

Yet He found me; I beheld Him,
Bleeding on the accursed tree;
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self and some of Thee!"

Day by day his tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full and free,
Brought me lower, while I whispered,
"Less of self and more of Thee!"

Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, thy love at last has conquered,
"None of self and all of Thee!"

Another message from a farmer's son who came from the Middle West to Haverford. I want to give you the contrast his letter affords: "The examination for entrance into Haverford College brought me into contact with Pliny E. Chase in an unusual way. My home was a farm eight miles from Cincinnati—distant an hour and a half over dusty, limestone roads. I attended the public schools in the city, and undertook to prepare for Haverford at the Hughes High School, but finding that I was not reaching my goal, I left the school early in 1872, and employed an old fashioned tutor to give me a final drill for the examination. He was a shabby, bearded man, reeking with tobacco smoke, who sat by his dressing table in a bath wrapper and great carpet slippers. He undertook his task with many misgivings, because, for this college,



CHASE HALL.
One of the group of College Buildings on the Campus, devoted to recitation and class-rooms.

the requirements were so brief and precise. He warned me often by saying, 'I fear this catalogue really means what it says, and unless we have filled every requirement you will not succeed.'

"The applicant was to pass in mathematics, and, among other things, to have read three books of Caesar, so much Virgil, and much more that could not be compassed in the allotted time. My tutor's pessimism grew, and his face lengthened when he found me slow to learn. I noticed that he drilled me on special passages and problems, which he evidently believed would arise in the examinations. He had studied examination papers with much shrewdness, and held that passing successfully through such ordeals was a gift rather than a display of real knowledge of the subject itself. At the appointed time, I took my seat in a college classroom, where Dr. Samuel Gummere presided. He made a clear statement about the college ideals and the requirements of the day's work. Later Thomas Chase, restless and lion-headed, talked more like a poet, and was full of the opportunities for scholarship that were ahead of us. Pliny Chase, wearing spectacles, and with the air of a quiet scholar, took the chair, and the paper work began. No greater contrast can be imagined

than the personalities of this officer and my tutor. This was quite definitely impressed on me and I felt a pang of guilt steal over me as I realized that the passage to be translated from Caesar was one of the few upon which I had been drilled. I am afraid my respect for my old tutor was hopelessly lost in the new atmosphere of Haverford. At all events, I was uneasy in my mind, and at the end of the day, I was quietly telling Professor Chase that I had passed in Latin translation, but that I had not read three books of Caesar. This act of mine resulted from the radiating influence of the man himself; it is stated here to confirm my observation that no student willingly deceived Pliny Chase nor lied to him.

“He was a mature man and I a lad of seventeen, who had never before talked to a man of his type. He did not take it lightly, nor as a matter to be either amused or pained at. He did not cross examine the witness. With gentle interest, he quietly reviewed the purpose of such examinations—they were an endeavor to discover whether or not an applicant had reached a degree of mental maturity that would make it possible for him to do the college work and benefit by it. He made no note of the facts, and during his talk he maintained a perfect poise. The

relation of master and pupil was at that moment established, and the foundation was laid for four years' work together.

"It should be recalled that we were in an age of doubts, when scientific facts were unfolding and being arrogantly paraded, to the great pain of most religious people. Naturally these matters were often brought into the class room and fearlessly approached by Pliny Chase. He sifted the evidence and was so clear in his reasoning that in my mind there never was much uneasiness, because his point of view seemed so wise and final. It was on these occasions that one found out that he really had a very personal and abundant interest in his students and sympathized with the growing pains of the minds of boys. It was customary in those days for students at Haverford to argue their individual views in the class room, but he had a gift of persuading us to think for ourselves. After all there is no better test of a teacher's power. His classes in philosophy were most impressive, and it was from these that he became to the Class of '76, its favorite among the professors, all of whom were men of learning."

My father continued his connection with Haverford until near the end of his life, and his residence was the same through his stay there.

His "going home" was one of quietness. His death seemed as a pathway leading to the fairer fields which he had known.

Charles G. Ames, speaking at his funeral, said: "When a life such as this of our beloved friend is taken from our mortal sight, it recalls the belief of the Greeks, that the lambent torch of life was flung to the sky, and there became a beacon star for those who mourned for him on earth, that they might raise their eyes to the heavens and find consolation in the thought that the precious life burned clear and steadily still, for the guidance of all who sought to follow in the beloved footsteps, steadfast to the end."

And so, in words halting and inadequate, with hand not always firm as it should be, I have here tried to point out the star that is still my father's life influence. I am thankful to all who have helped me in my sacred task, my labor of love, and I would ask the reader, in the end as in the beginning, to think of my father as still alive; perchance to hear his voice, in all sweet reverence, repeat the words of the Master, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."



NEREUS MENDENHALL.

NEREUS MENDENHALL

1819-1893

*Soon rested those who fought; but thou
Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
Thy warfare only ends with life.*

* * * * *

*Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,—
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.*

W. C. B.¹

NEREUS MENDENHALL

When William Penn left the shores of the Old World to inaugurate his "Holy Experiment" in the New, several English Friends from the Manor of Mildenhall, in Wiltshire, decided to come with him. Their names were Moses, Benjamin, John and Mary Mendenhall, the last named being sister of the three men. Whether they came in the vessel with William Penn I can not say, but there did sail with him on board the *Welcome* another who was to become a maternal ancestor of a part of the American descendants—Thomas Pearson, who was Penn's surveyor.

In Fiske's *Dutch and Quaker Colonies* the following account is given of the naming of Chester County where all of this group seem to have settled. "Turning to his friend and shipmate, Thomas Pearson, he (William Penn) said, 'Providence has brought us here safe. Thou hast been the companion of my perils. What wilt thou that I call this place?' 'Call it Chester,' replied

Pearson, who had come from that most quaint and beautiful city of old England."

Deeds for grants of land made by William Penn are still extant as are marriage certificates for the younger generation of Mendenhalls. As John was the forerunner of the line to which the subject of this sketch belonged, mention will be made only of his descendants. His son Aaron, in 1715, married Rose Pearson and amongst other signatures to the marriage certificate that of her father, Thomas Pearson, occurred. Another daughter, Sarah, who married John West, was the mother of Sir Benjamin West, the painter.

In West's picture of the Elm Tree Treaty his grandfather, Thomas Pearson, is represented as standing near William Penn holding a map in his hand.

James Mendenhall, a son of Aaron and Rose Pearson Mendenhall, moved to North Carolina in 1759. His wife Hannah ap Thomas was a sister of Richard Thomas, colonel in the Colonial Army. They settled in what is now Guilford County, on the banks of Deep River. The deed for this land, made to James Mendenhall by the Earl of Granville in 1762, is still in the hands of the family. There James built a dwelling, a grist and a saw mill. The *wanderlust* must have

been strong within him, for no sooner than he had put things in order there he turned his property over to his son George and himself moved on to Georgia where in a few years he died. His wife returned to the home of her son, who by this time had by purchase considerably increased his estate and founded the village which still bears his father's name.

Inns were scarce in those days and the one nearest the Mendenhall property was some twenty miles away. To accommodate travelers, George Mendenhall proposed to open a tavern at his home. The greedy inn-keepers up the road were very much opposed to this and to prevent it effected that the public highway then being surveyed should pass almost a mile south of his house. Not in the least disconcerted by this manoeuver on the part of his opponents, he laid out the village with this road as its central street, sold lots to some of his friends, gave others to his children and very soon there sprang up a lively, thriving town.

About the same time that the settlement from Chester was made, there came other groups of Friends from the Island of Nantucket. They were probably led to leave the exposed position by the march of events which preceded the war of the Revolution. The decline of the whale-

fishing too influenced them. At any rate they came in rather large groups and settled in the central counties. Here in the midst of the inland districts there still are numerous descendants of almost every family once dwelling upon Nantucket—Worths, Gardners, Macys, Foldgers, Starbucks, Barkers, Mitchels, Russells, Husseys, Colemans, etc. With them they brought their economical and thrifty ways and became communities sufficient unto themselves. Naturally they intermarried with the comers from Chester. George Mendenhall married Judith Gardner and the war found them busily occupied with farm, mills, household operations, and the care of a large family.

A part of Cornwallis' army encamped upon a hill near the house. There is an interesting little incident connected with this encampment which shows that the Nantucket fortitude was still strong in Judith Gardner.

The British had commandeered the mill and all the grain stored there and had also swept the entire premises bare of food stuff. At last the only remaining milch cow was driven up the hill by the soldiers. There was a houseful of children to be fed and this cow was the only remaining source of supply. Nothing daunted Judith went at once to the headquarters of the army and laid

the situation before the officer in charge, who at once issued the order that the cow be returned to the owner. Judith walked down the hill leading her cow.

As there is no mention in the tradition of the officer being Lord Cornwallis it is reasonable to suppose that at this particular time he was elsewhere. This is the more probable as there was another division of his army encamped at another mill not far away. The children, however, remembered to have seen Cornwallis stop at a water trough just outside the gate and water his horse as the army on the hill was moving toward the disastrous victory of Guilford Courthouse.

For a time almost everyone of this group of children settled near the old home either in the village or on farms adjoining. Richard Mendenhall had spent some time in Chester, Pennsylvania, acquiring his trade of tanner. Whether he also attended school there I cannot say, but he somewhere gained an education much beyond the average at that time and was a scholar of no mean attainments, eager in the acquisition of knowledge to his dying day. He read the Latin authors with ease and delight, was well grounded in history and exceedingly interested in the march of contemporary events.

Upon his return from Chester he established a tannery in the village and built a brick house immediately on the main street which was ample for storing his leather, for office, and for living rooms for himself. He was not married for several years, but had rooms in this house. The main entrance hall was a room of goodly dimensions with a very large fireplace. There for sixteen years, I have been told, he held a night school for any of the village folk who cared to come, himself giving instruction and accommodation without charge.

It is very difficult for me to hold myself within the necessary limits when speaking of my grandfather, for although he died before I was born I have heard more of what he did and said than of all the other members of the family put together. He was genial and kindly, a friend of everybody, and used always to lend a hand to help anyone in need. He married Mary Pegg, a descendant of another family from Chester. If he was "*suaviter in modo*" she was "*fortiter in re*," who looked well to her household. Her spinning-wheel and loom stood in her kitchen; from the work of her hands her family was clothed.

They began housekeeping in the house above mentioned, and an open-handed hospitality was at once installed which continued as long as a

member of the family dwelt beneath that roof. The house with its ample porch paved with flagstones opened upon the street. Here the many wayfarers stopped for rest and a refreshing gourd of water. If the journey was long or the day burdensome either from heat or bad weather, they were invited to stay for a meal or over night. Particularly were men from a distance urged to come in and remain awhile. Thus was Commodore Wilkes entertained when he was on an exploring expedition in the State, after having sailed the seas over, visiting South America and many other countries. Such men were a god-send to Richard Mendenhall, for they could give him much information about the customs and geography of foreign lands. Commodore Wilkes told him that of all the countries which he had visited, taking it all in all, North Carolina had the most delightful climate. Their home was noted far and wide for its hospitality and well-regulated household. No one was ever turned empty from his door, and he seemed capable of extracting something good and interesting from everyone.

I have mentioned the fact that most of the children of George and Judith Mendenhall settled in or near the village of Jamestown. The youngest son, George C. Mendenhall, inherited the

original home, and as his father had done before him, added many acres to the original holdings, improved the dwelling and rebuilt the mills. The home was built upon a hillside sloping almost precipitously to the river. This he terraced by building several stone walls, and made the whole very attractive by plantings of various kinds.

He was a lawyer of distinction in the State and a citizen worthy of that title, greatly interested in everything which tended to an improved and enlightened state and community. A thorough believer in the principles of the Society of Friends, he would have been a valuable member of the Yearly Meeting. He married Eliza Dunn, a woman of intelligence and refinement, but the heir to a large number of Negro slaves. For this act he was promptly disowned and never came back into the Quaker fold. Both he and his wife were opposed to slavery and were quite ready to arrange for the freedom of those belonging to them as soon as this could be done. Little as some uninformed zealots believed, this was a difficult thing for the masters and a perilous thing for the Negroes. The only safe way was to transport them to free soil, and even then to have left them there to provide for themselves would have been a cruelty. Before any arrange-

ment could be achieved, Eliza died leaving an infant son. Judith Gardner was still living, but did not long survive. The little boy was turned over to the wife of Richard Mendenhall.

The Negro population on the estate grew with wonderful rapidity. They were well fed, well clothed, and each family had its own cabin on the bluff down the river. George Mendenhall never sold a slave, but he bought several who came to him pleading that he would not allow them to be put up at public auction and very likely sent into the more southern states. I well remember seeing one such old man, too feeble to do anything, sitting by the fire in the lower house.

After a few years George Mendenhall married as his second wife, Delphina E. Gardner, a woman of rare spiritual and mental refinement and culture. To her had been given the best advantages which the country afforded for an education. She was, too, a beautiful woman. Her countenance radiated the luminous soul within, and her kindness and tenderness went forth to all who came in contact with her. She at once entered into her husband's plans for liberating the slaves. This, however, is too long a story for this sketch. I have described this one family because it, more than all others, was helpful in

forming the character of my father. This new aunt loved him devotedly and never lost an opportunity of manifesting this love and solicitude. Years after when her death approached, she requested that he should close her eyes.

When Ezra M. Meader, who was leaving New England to enter upon his work in connection with the Baltimore Association, was calling upon John G. Whittier, a friend of the family, and was asked to what place he would go, replied, "First I expect to go to the home of Delphina E. Mendenhall." Whittier said, "Delphina? Why, she is a whole Quarterly Meeting in herself."

Thus within less than a mile of each other these two congenial families lived, mutually helpful, sharing each other's joys and sorrows, encouraging one another in every good word and work.

Nereus, the fourth child and second son of Richard and Mary Pegg Mendenhall, was born on the fourteenth of Eighth month, 1819. Quite different from the elder children, he was a delicate little fellow who very early manifested a thoughtful and sensitive disposition. There are two stories often told by his mother and elder sister which indicate the trend of his thoughts and feelings. At night after all the other mem-

bers of the family were asleep, his mother would hear him weeping before the large fireplace. He had left his bed in the room above and stolen down stairs to seek comfort from her in his distress over the sins of the world. A most unnatural procedure certainly. What did he, a little boy in that isolated community, know of the wickedness of the world? By them it was considered an indication of remarkable perception and a depth of religious feeling. That he was a boy more than usually thoughtful I do not doubt, but find an explanation for this perturbation in the conversations to which he must have listened.

The living room which I have mentioned as having a large fireplace was a kind of gathering place for several of the villagers. Richard Mendenhall had for that time a considerable library and regularly subscribed to such periodicals as were obtainable. He was a genial host who enjoyed dividing what he had, helping to educate those who could not educate themselves, and sharing any information he had with those who wished to hear. In that room whatever was going on at home or abroad was discussed. Often all available seats were occupied. In one corner of the room a narrow, inclosed stairway wound to the room above. Two of its steps protruded into the room and this was a favorite seat with

the children. Here doubtless the small boy Nereus listened to the men discussing wars and rumors of wars. His father was an ardent abolitionist, and regularly received *The Liberator* and *The Emancipator*.

Probably the horrors of the slave trade would be discussed as well as neighborhood happenings, topics not suited to children's ears. He was unusually sensitive, and such matters were not conducive to slumber and were frightful companions in a dark room. No wonder he crept down stairs after the company was gone and sat sobbing by the fire.

There are two little incidents of this period which I will give to substantiate my contention that he was not a dangerously pious child and that these fits of weeping had a very understandable background. At one time after having been sent up stairs to bed, he discovered a large black beetle in his room. He began experimenting upon it, and finding that it could easily carry the candlestick upon its back, called his mother, who came up stairs and was greatly amazed to see the candle, apparently of its own accord, move off under the bed. This so delighted her little son that he never forgot her look and exclamation.

When quite a little fellow he was very fond

of stilts and would walk and run about upon them with great pleasure. On a cold morning he was out taking a turn on his stilts, when along came a man of the community not noted for his sobriety. To tease the boy he jerked one of the stilts from under him, giving him a tumble. The small boy came to the front at once, and quickly getting upon his feet, sent a small flattish stone spinning in the direction of the man who had carried the stilt on, thus adding insult to injury. The stone went as if guided, took a little downward curve, and *click* went the tickler in his pocket, and the liquor ran down his side. The man thought to catch the boy and punish him, but he reckoned without his host. The boy was swift of foot and very light of heart just then. I have never heard of any repentance or regret for this deed.

His intense love for outdoor sports must have acted as a curative for his strained psychical state. The woods were very dense in those days, and a favorite pastime for the boys was to jump from limb to limb like squirrels; this he greatly enjoyed, and would jump for half a mile without coming to the ground.

The other story of a period somewhat later after he had started to school is typical and carries its own explanation. The boys appear never

to have participated in the general work on the place, but the garden was their special province. It was large and gave them plenty of exercise when school time was over. Though very fond of outdoor sports Nereus never cared for marbles—that battleground of boys—and when an interval for rest came and his elder brother Cyrus sought the company of other boys upon the street and joined in this sport, he climbed into a great fig bush in the garden, in which he had arranged two boards so that one served for a seat for himself and the other a shelf for his books. Here he read or studied his lessons. His fondness for study seems to have been innate, and the love of reading characterized his boyhood as well as his later years.

The years of boyhood were spent in attending such schools as the village afforded and in gaining from his father's store of learning a knowledge of history, geography, and classical lore. Richard Mendenhall saw to it that a school was kept in the village. If the neighbors were inclined, they joined and helped pay the teacher, if they did not see fit to do this, he did it himself, and the children were kept in school. How he found teachers I do not know, but he often succeeded in securing men of really fine scholarship. I remember hearing my father speak of

an Irishman who at one time taught them, and he frequently spoke of "Uncle Andy" Caldwell, who seemed to have held the position for several years. He was a genial and kindly elderly man of good education, who smoked his pipe during school time, and instead of ringing a bell after recess, called, "Books! Books!" The children studied their lessons aloud and the din in the school-room was deafening. Each syllable was pronounced in spelling and the single vowels were shouted out that "'a' bysel 'fa,' 'o' bysel 'fo,' 'i' bysel 'fi,'"—which interpreted is "'a' by its self 'a,' " etc. The older children were allowed to take their books and go into the grove and study.

Such a school would hardly pass muster now with all of our improved methods, but every one of these children was well-grounded, not only in the necessary three "R's," but also in geography, some history, and the foundation for classics. "Uncle Andy" did his work well and his memory was cherished. Whether he was a relative of the great teacher David Caldwell I do not know; the latter had a famous school in Greensboro in which almost all of our lawyers, judges, and teachers of that time were educated.

By the time Nereus was thirteen his love of learning had grown so strong that it was his

wish to continue his studies. The Friends of Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and New England had combined to establish what is now Haverford College and toward this his face was set. The additional expense, however, was more than his father at the time felt himself able to meet and he allowed his son to enter a printing office in Greensboro. The occupation was congenial. He rapidly acquired the art of type-setting. His associates, too, were of the best, and he came in touch with the ablest men of the place. During his time of leisure his studies were industriously pursued, and this work was so well done that in 1837 he was able to enter Haverford as a freshman and finish the entire course with honor in two years, thus crowding a four-years' course into half the allotted time. He passed his courses at the school without infringing upon a single regulation, and attracted to himself the life-long affection and esteem not only of his classmates but of the faculty and board of managers as well.

His introduction to Dr. Henry Hartshorne, one of his classmates, was on this wise. On the football field each saw the other approaching, one a slender stripling whom the other thought no match for himself, the other a rotund, rather diminutive figure whom the stripling was cer-

tain to master. They thus rushed together to be landed both on their backs in opposite directions.

That the spiritual vision was cleared as well as the intellectual life invigorated is shown by the following little testimony given by him near the close of his life to his dear friend and class-mate, Dr. Richard Randolph, of Philadelphia. It will be noted that in this as in many other instances the enlightenment came through the devoted study of the Holy Scriptures, of which to his dying day he was a tireless student. His little Greek Testament lying on the stand beside the bed was one of the few books read during his last illness.

"The revelation which in my little dormitory at Haverford came to me as alone by the window I read Psalm 34—10, 'The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing'; however unable at some times to see how it is true, from that time on to the present I have never relinquished nor ceased to cherish."

Upon graduation from Haverford he took the place as principal of Friends Boarding School at New Garden. The life was arduous, for in those days the Boards of Management had the idea, not yet wholly outgrown, that the fiber of

teachers was rubber and steel, and that the occupation of teaching was such an easy task that the more work piled on the better. Notwithstanding his multifarious duties, which lasted from early morning until the students were in bed asleep, he prepared himself to enter Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, from which he graduated in 1845.

When the time came for him to assume the *toga virilis* and either put on a Quaker coat or appear to disregard the custom and costume of Friends, he passed through a very severe struggle and suffered greatly. To appear in a peculiar and noticeable garb was contrary both to his feelings and judgment, but he was not willing, on the other hand, to depart from the good order of the denomination, and decided to conform to the requirements of this superstitious reverence for clothes. I do not understand the psychology of such a performance, but I know from much experience that of all creatures a boy is the most conventional. It is torture for him to vary from his group and nothing so crosses his spirit as to be obliged to do so. And I am convinced that however much may have been accomplished, in certain ways to advantage, much more has been irrevocably lost by this method of segregation.

The little village to which he returned had

changed since he, a boy of thirteen, left to enter the printing office, since which time he had been almost continuously away. The children had grown up; his younger brother and sisters were grown. George C. Mendenhall had opened a law school, having erected a building for its accommodation on the bluff beyond the river, opposite his residence. To this a goodly number of young men were attracted. Nereus' brother, Cyrus, after completing his studies in this school, had been admitted to the bar and was practicing law. A local physician had several pupils "reading medicine." There was a flourishing Masonic Lodge, an Odd Fellows order, a literary and debating society, a Temperance Society, and an Anti-Slavery Association, and enough intelligent young people to make quite a brisk little center of social life. Upon his graduation from Jefferson Medical College he decided to locate for the practice of his profession in his native town, and so dropped into this neither understood nor understanding group.

Just when the struggle over the coat occurred it is not possible to say, but he must have been wearing a Quaker coat when he became principal of New Garden Boarding School, otherwise he could not have held the position. There followed a period of mental and spiritual storm and

stress, unusually prolonged by his conviction that it was necessary for him to cling to the religious views then held. His mind was in revolt, but he believed that his soul's salvation depended upon the acceptance of the tenets as taught not only in the Bible but by those whom the denomination had recognized as ministers. These were held to be in deed and truth the mouthpiece of God. One at this time can scarcely believe it possible that such opinions prevailed.

His medical studies seemed but to accentuate the conflict in his soul, and upon his return to take up the practice of medicine in his native town, these unsettled questions almost made of him a recluse in the midst of relatives and friends. Through it all he met the regulations of his meeting in a manner most gratifying to those administering the Discipline. His attendance at meeting was regular and prompt. He participated unflinchingly in the duties imposed by appointments on committees, and such other offices as came to him. In 1848 he was recorded as an elder, and accompanied Daniel Barker on a ministerial visit to Tennessee.

None of these services could answer "the same old baffling questions" which tormented him. He studied the Bible only to be the more perplexed; he read the writings of the early Friends, but



ORIANNA MENDENHALL.

somehow they did not clear up the puzzling problems. His health gave way, and he was obliged to abandon the practice of medicine. The new occupation which presented itself was fortunate in every way. As soon as he was able again to begin work, a position on the engineering staff of the North Carolina Central Railroad was offered him. This meant a vigorous outdoor life and a tent for sleep. It worked like a charm, for his health at once began to improve; the busy days in the open brought refreshing sleep at night. If the problems remained unsolved the distress they occasioned was softened. His associates, too, were congenial and intelligent men. Wilson was chief engineer, and with him Dr. Mendenhall laid off that wonderful line which crosses the Blue Ridge at Round Knob. During this period the book which helped to bring him to *terra firma* in regard to the Bible was Neander's *Life of Christ*.

In October, 1851, Nereus Mendenhall was married to Orianna Wilson, who had been a student at the school during his first connection with it, and with whom, as a cousin of his aunt Delphina Mendenhall, he had been associated ever since. Although a native of Mississippi, she too was of Nantucket stock, and numbered among her ancestors three of the pilgrims who came on the

Mayflower, viz., John Carver, John Tilley, and John Howland. Her character, in many respects the counterpart of her husband's, seemed admirably adapted to giving him the assistance needed. She had perfect health, sound common sense, an excellent mind, much executive ability, and withal a disposition which always looked on the bright side and made things pleasant, full of helpfulness for all about her. Her care for his health was constant, and it was largely due to this fact that he afterwards became a strong and vigorous man.

She was what William James would have called a once born soul with a simple, direct faith. When once her husband asked her whether she had doubts and perplexities about religion, she answered, "No. The Lord has cared for me thus far and I know He always will if I do my part. What's the use of perplexities? You know what is right, do it and that is all there is to it." She never failed to do her part. It was never left for some one else to do. Hers were the hands that "are quicker unto good" in her home and in the community.

Dr. Mendenhall had been almost continuously connected with the boarding-school as teacher, superintendent, or trustee. In early manhood his delicate health would not permit of several

consecutive years in the school room and he varied his employment from time to time by engaging in civil engineering, the outdoor exercise and tent life being the best tonic available. He was thus occupied during the years immediately preceding the Civil War, his home being in the pleasant little village of Florence, N. C., one mile from Deep River Meeting house.

The country was full of unrest; from religious principle he was opposed to war and, owing to his strong anti-slavery sentiments, he was out of sympathy with the prevailing spirit of the South. Upon the very eve of the fray he had sent for several copies of "Helper's incendiary document," *The Impending Crisis*, and had distributed them among certain of his friends who were like minded with himself. Somehow the rumor of this action came to the ears of the powers that then were, and the culprit was summoned to appear before the bar of justice in the town of Greensboro. He had many warm personal friends even amongst those whose political faith differed from his own, and some of them, unwilling to have him suffer, and knowing the quickest way to silence the matter, sent word to his wife to "collect those books and burn them." This the Doctor would never have done himself, but it was doubtless the simplest way through the diffi-

culty. She hurried from house to house collecting the books, driving several miles before all the scattered documents were again at the starting point. These with those still undisposed of she quietly tore open and heaped upon the blazing fire in the sitting-room. "What is thee doing that for?" her husband queried. "Because Cyrus sent me word that it *must* be done and I intend to do it." He said no more, but regretfully watched the funeral pyre until it had consumed the whole. After it had all burned down and gone up in smoke, a tiny scrap of paper burned to ashes but clinging together, dropped at his feet, upon which the printing was still easily read, "Poor South Carolina——is her night-cap, ——is her day dream." The complete passage is: "Poor South Carolina! Folly is her night-cap; fanaticism is her day-dream; fire-eating is her pastime. She has lost her better judgment; the dictates of reason and philosophy have no influence upon her actions." (Helper's *Impending Crisis*, p. 225.)

In the confusion and distress incident to the outbreak of the war, the boarding-school was left without a teacher. Numbers of Friends had already gone West and others were going, and the whole country was in a turmoil. The appeal was made to Dr. Mendenhall to become prin-

cial. He consented to do so and moved his family into the farm house, the first house built on what is now the college property.

The war cloud gathered with alarming velocity, and as many of the Friends and relatives of the family were joining the general migration, the question as to what was his duty in the matter became a pressing one. In the West was freedom from the ever-pressing burdens which all anti-slavery men had to bear in slave communities.

After the war had been in progress for a time, but before the blockade was complete, he was urged by his brother-in-law, Dr. Nathan Hill, with whom he was much associated, to leave the South, and with him seek a home in the West. Nereus Mendenhall had serious objections to rearing his family in the midst of slave territory. The prospects for worldly advancement and the accumulation of wealth should he go West were promising, and the escape from the immediate effects of the war for himself and family, most enticing.

On the other hand the school was full and there was no one to take his place should he leave. The need was great that the school should be preserved. However, the household goods were packed in boxes and home-made trunks and

carried to the station at Jamestown and the family ready to leave on the morrow. The conviction grew stronger that it was the will of the Lord for him to remain at New Garden and stand by the school, come what might. He was obedient to the holy vision and, after assuring himself that such a course would meet the approval of his wife, ordered the boxes brought back and himself went again to the old school-room.

To conduct classes during such a period was in itself a feat of ingenuity. Text books were unattainable and it was necessary to use such as pupils themselves could obtain, or he could find in the garret of the school building. Some rather antiquated volumes were used in the same classes where some modern ones were employed. This which might have disconcerted some teachers gave him no trouble, as he could easily supply any deficiency in text books from his own store-house of knowledge. Amid the varied exercises of mathematics, philosophy, chemistry, and several stages in classical courses, he took most particular care that the pupils should be taught to read and write their own language correctly. His drills in enunciation and pronunciation were most rigidly carried through, and each student no matter what his advancement was re-

quired to write an essay, usually upon a subject of his choice, a certain number of times each week. There being no paper upon which they could be written, a pile of slates was put upon his desk. He was very exacting as to written compositions, as his method of dealing with two shows. One had *Gluc* for its subject and was entirely correct. Then Dr. Mendenhall said, "Yes, I saw that label on a glue-pot in the window. You are to write your own compositions." The subject of the other was *The Opossum*, and read, "The opossum is a marsupial quadruped with a long, prehensile tail." Then the teacher said, "John, what does marsupial mean?" John did not know. "What is a quadruped?" Of this, too, John was ignorant. "Well, what is a prehensile tail?" By this time confusion was the part of John, and Dr. Mendenhall said, "I want you to consult the dictionary, but you must not copy your essays from it," and then explained the meaning of the words.

The school never closed and though sometimes the prospect looked rather gloomy, and many things to which all were accustomed were unattainable, all were mercifully provided for. Tuition as well as board was paid in flour, meat, meal, homespun cloth, sorghum—anything which could be used in the family—and there was

always an abundance and to spare, as many a poor deserter and bushwhacker found to his own satisfaction. The school barn was a large ramshackle building, which became a sort of rendezvous for the hounded human beings who preferred this life to the ranks. There Elizabeth Cox, wife of the Superintendent, Jonathan E. Cox, and Orianna Mendenhall furnished much provisions for the hungry men, who could be seen creeping to the friendly shelter late in the evening and who were gone before daybreak.

One such slept for several nights in the house, which process created great wonderment amongst the children. In the first place the two elder daughters, after retiring, were desired to leave their room with no reason assigned and were not allowed upon succeeding nights to occupy it, still the bed was to be made in the morning; and it was noticed that the window opening towards the woods was raised. Soon a man was discovered creeping stealthily up, and by and by, in reward for patient investigation, the identity was discovered. What child could resist trying to find out?

As an illustration of some of the privations incident to the war, an account written several years ago for the Philadelphia Friend, and taken from its pages is here given.

"Now every hour in the day was so occupied that he (Dr. Mendenhall) had no time for reading, so it became imperative to have light at night, and light was difficult to procure. Previous to the war we had used what we called fluid lamps which gave good light, and candles. No 'fluid' could now be obtained, and candles became very scarce.

"There were candle moulds which could be used in making tallow candles, and this the women did when they could procure tallow, but both tallow and the necessary bees-wax were often difficult to obtain, and in our part of the state pine knots, which furnished our eastern fellow-citizens with light, were wanting.

"It was rather pitiful to see father close his books and sit before the fire. He determined to have a light by some means, and asked 'Uncle Tommy' (a fine old Negro man who for many years worked about the place) to join him in an opossum hunt. Opossums have a very oily fat, and he thought that if he could get this, he might use it in a lamp. At first mother protested, saying, 'The bushwhackers will think you are conscript hunters and will shoot you.' But when the time for the hunt came, and she saw the Nimrods preparing for the expedition, her anxiety turned to merriment, for two funnier looking persons

never chased an opossum. Both were tall men, father dressed in Quaker garb, plain coat and broad-brimmed hat. 'Uncle' Tommy always wore the Revolutionary swallow-tail. They had a lantern, but no dog. How they hoped to tree an opossum I do not know, but the marsupials were abundant in the woods, and father wanted light just then more than anything else.

"There was a story often told in those days of a great hunter who was a sure shot, named Lamb, who at one time was out hunting coons, and having treed a coon was on the point of shooting when the coon said, 'Hold on, is your name Lamb?' 'Yes, my name is Lamb.' 'Billie Lamb?' 'Yes, Billie Lamb.' 'Captain Billie Lamb?' 'Yes, Captain Billie Lamb.' 'Well, don't shoot. I'll come down.'

"As the two started out mother said, 'When the opossums see that outfit, I think they will come down.' Nothing came of the hunt, and father was obliged to find other material for his light. For a time he used a queer little grease lamp, which was shaped much as the lamp in Greek pictures—a little shallow bowl with a handle at one end and a lip at the other, with the wick lying in the oil in the bowl and hanging out at the lip where it was lighted.

"That there was not more actual suffering for

the necessities of life must have been due to the fact that the South was entirely an agricultural district, and that our climate gave us the great advantage of wintering stock with much less care and expense than can be done in the colder parts of our country—at any rate we adapted ourselves to the circumstances and did the best we could.”

Owing to an extensive acquaintance in the North and West, Dr. Mendenhall was enabled to assist many through the lines. Frequently he would be aroused in the dead of night by some acquaintance or former pupil seeking assistance on the “under ground railroad.”

By and by news would be received that these were safely over. One only was lost in the attempt. Zeno Dixon, an estimable young man, who had lately been in school, was overtaken on the banks of the Chowan river and shot while attempting to swim over. This was a great sorrow to his friend and teacher, who followed each one with the greatest solicitude.

During this period he bound to himself in lasting friendship very many of the young men who were his pupils. Through the somewhat stern disciplinarian and exacting teacher they recognized the unswerving loyalty to truth and righteousness, and penetrated to the loving, sympathetic

soul. These, both in his own denomination and out of it, remained deeply attached to him and were followed by his kindest interest.

He was particularly successful in implanting in his pupils a love of excellence both in character and in learning, and inspiring in them a determination to continue their studies. Several of them by their achievements in after life made for themselves reputations of a high order. Braxton Craven, who was the founder of Trinity College, which is now (1926) being transformed into Duke University, was one of them; Dr. A. M. Elliott, America's most distinguished French scholar upon whom the Legion of Honor was conferred, being another; so was Pendleton King, a distinguished scholar and for some time connected with the consular service; and teachers, ministers of the Gospel and many who have exerted a wide influence in North Carolina and many other States.

Several of the Friends were conscripted and carried to the army, they refused to fight or perform any military duty whatever. These were punished in various ways and thrown into Castle Thunder in Richmond. Various attempts were made to secure their release. Dr. Mendenhall was sent by the Friends to intercede with the Confederate Government in their behalf. This



The home of Richard Mendenhall at Jamestown, N. C., frequently referred to in the text.

was a perilous undertaking, but it was performed in the same dauntless spirit in which every known duty was done. With his friend, John B. Crenshaw, of Richmond, he visited the Friends in their jail, encouraging them. Together they sought the release of the prisoners, appealing in person to Jefferson Davis, who treated them most courteously, but had no power to grant their request.

These were times to make men's hearts quail, and to *stand*, having done all that could be done, was heroic. He never shrank from avowing himself a *Quaker*, and whenever he heard that sect abused or misrepresented he did not hesitate to maintain the principles which it professed, on the street, in the railway trains, anywhere and everywhere he would show the incompatibility of all war with the spirit and teaching of Christ.

During those years he was very active in the business of the Yearly Meeting, serving as clerk and an efficient member of the Meeting for Sufferings, now the Permanent Board. In addition to these things and the regular daily requirements of the school room, he carried on his own private study most diligently, studying Latin, Greek, German, Hebrew, Science and Philosophy. Neander's *Life of Christ* was an almost constant companion and from it he gained much

assistance in the solution of some questions which had long vexed him.

The awful atrocities committed by the children of Israel in the name of the Lord, and recorded in the Holy Scriptures, seemed to him incompatible with any conception of God of which he was capable. *Progression* was the key which let in the light and these things ceased to trouble him. He also found much help in Whittier's poems. "He has travelled over the very same ground," he would frequently say. "The Shadow and the Light" was particularly helpful, and these lines were often on his lips:

"Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed Thou know'st,
Wide as our need Thy favors fall.
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all."

During the years at New Garden, aside from all his other duties, he took time to teach his children himself. Sometimes they recited in classes with the young men, and sometimes by themselves at home. Never was there any allowance for lessons poorly learned, because they were girls. Never was the slightest remark or intimation that they should not learn just as much and make as much use of their knowledge as if they had been boys. This at a time when

Vassar and Wellesley and Smith and Bryn Mawr were unthought of, and long before Cornell even had opened her doors to women.

At the close of the war, after harboring deserters and bushwhackers, and visiting sick and dying, escaped Yankee prisoners, who had made their way into the community, he allowed two Confederate soldiers to make his home their place of refuge during the disbanding of the Southern and the occupation of the country by the Northern army. One came all the way from Richmond with much treasure and one tarried while all his earthly possessions, in the form of a large cotton factory, were consumed by the torch of the Northern soldiers.

During the chaotic times following the close of the Civil War Dr. Mendenhall assisted teachers from the north in establishing schools for the colored people.

In 1867 his connection with the Boarding School was severed. He had in all given nine of the best years of his life to this institution and had been the main factor in preventing the closing of the school in the Civil War. Had this taken place, it would in all likelihood have brought to an end the educational work of the Friends in North Carolina. Such a terminus would have greatly weakened, if it had not

brought to extinction, the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends. He often said, "I feel that I am wasting time when I am not engaged in teaching."

He at once removed to his farm on Deep River, one mile from the Meeting, from which he never removed his membership. For a time he took charge of the Monthly Meeting school at that place, which under the enthusiastic management of Ezra Meader, had attained considerable note. Here many young people received instruction and were stimulated to pursue their studies elsewhere, and from that school teachers have gone out to widely different localities. His constant encouragement of the Literary Club, which the pupils formed, is regarded as an important factor in the development of the taste for literature and mental cultivation which still characterizes nearly every member. Thus though severed from the wider influence which, as Principal of the Boarding School, he had exerted, by doing what his hands found to do in the quiet community in which his lot was cast, he kindled a love for learning in the minds of the boys and girls about him which has already illumined not a few.

Though doing little with the farm as such, he still improved certain portions of the land, making side-hill ditches, under drains, and along the

banks of the creek, dikes to prevent overflow. "The Oaks" became a delightful home, where the daughters studied, read, and assisted their mother. There was little outside society, but plenty of entertainment in the way of housekeeping and reading, the home being supplied with the best periodicals, ranging from the delightful *Children's Hour* for the little folks to *Littell's Living Age* for the eldest.

After a time Dr. Mendenhall again turned his attention to civil engineering, being employed upon surveys in South Carolina, also upon the construction of the line extending from Greensboro to Winston. Any reference to this period of his life would be incomplete without the mention of his dear friend, R. P. Atkinson, chief engineer on the Winston road. He was a man of rare endowments, possessing an unlimited amount of jollity, sweet-spirited, fresh, enjoyable fun. They never wearied of each other's company and the seasons spent together at "The Oaks" were greatly enjoyed by the whole family. Several years were thus spent. In 1870 he and D. F. Caldwell were elected to represent Guilford County in the Convention to change or amend the Constitution, should the people demand the change, but while they elected representatives to do the work they decided by an-

other vote that the work was not needed, so the Convention never met.

Though an out-and-out Abolitionist before the war, and a strong Union man during the four years' struggle, soon after its close he allied himself with the Democratic party in the State. The corruption and oppression of carpet-bag rule was so intolerable to one who had always stood for the rights of the oppressed that affiliation with it was to him impossible. He was twice elected to represent his county in the State Legislature, and was one time Democratic candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The following sentence, penned just after his death by his comrade, Jesse R. Wharton, of Greensboro, County Superintendent of Public Schools, describes his attitude when a candidate: "When a candidate for public office he scorned the ways of the political trimmer and delivered his real sentiments whether they were in accord with the views of the voters or not. He seemed to be utterly indifferent to the vote of a man whose judgment he was unable to convince. He cared nothing for office as a means of self-advancement, but only as a means of advancing what he conceived to be the best interests of his country."

He regarded a campaign as an opportunity of speaking to the people and stating before them

the truth as he saw it, and allowed his name to stand on the ticket several times with small thought of election. His independent attitude and the adherence to principles which were not popular, rendered him unsuitable for the party candidate at such times as ours.

He was an earnest advocate of the temperance cause, lecturing frequently upon that subject and throwing all of his personal influence upon the side of total abstinence. Because he hoped more from local option laws than national prohibition he never allied himself with the Prohibition party.

When it became necessary for our State to erect a new building for the care of the insane, Dr. Mendenhall was appointed by the legislature as one of the Board of Directors. He insisted that it be called a hospital and not an asylum, insanity being a disease and not a possession. His services on this committee were of the greatest importance both in the arrangement of the hospital and the thoroughness of its construction.

As has been said he felt teaching to be his God-given occupation and was never quite content when otherwise employed. The work upon the railroad in which he had been engaged was completed and the trains running upon the tracks.

There was no suitable opening nearby for the exercise of his ability in this direction. For several years his work had kept him closely within the confines of his own State. The pressure of war and post-war exigencies, the surveying and construction of railroads had given little leisure either for the acquisition of fresh knowledge or an acquaintance with the progress of modern thought, and for these wider fields and larger opportunities he had for some time been wishing. In 1876, learning of a vacancy in the Penn Charter School of Philadelphia, he applied for the situation. This seemed just the opportunity desired. The elder children had returned home from their sojourn at the Howland School, upon the shore of the beautiful Cayuga Lake in New York, and as Orianna Mendenhall was loath to break up and leave her home in the South unless another was fixed upon elsewhere, it was decided that the family should remain for the time, at least, at "The Oaks."

The years spent at the Penn Charter were very pleasant in many ways; old friendships were renewed and new ones formed. The advantages afforded by the city were eagerly embraced. After two years spent there he was offered a situation at Haverford College, which was accepted. His summers were spent at home, and during most

of the time one or another member of the family was either with him or nearby, one daughter spending a year at Dr. Hartshorne's school in Germantown, another, the succeeding year, studying painting in an Art school in the city, and still another spending several months in the vicinity, his wife also making him quite a lengthy visit. The work at Haverford was confining, as in addition to the duties as Superintendent he did a full amount of work in the class-room, which so wore upon him that at the close of two years he resigned.

Again he had recourse to civil engineering, which had twice before brought renewed health and strength, and did not fail in its good offices the third time. At this time he found occupation on the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad.

His interest in public education and the service he rendered it in his State and County is thus described by his friend above quoted:

"Dr. Mendenhall was not merely a scholar of wide and varied attainments, he was not simply a profound student, he was these and even more. He was an intelligent, earnest and zealous lover of humanity. He made his extensive learning subservient to the cause of humanity and his sympathies were as far reaching as the human

race. Believing that true education was the great lever to lift up his fellow men to higher and nobler views of life, he was always a steady and ardent friend of universal education. Although at times discouraged at the slow progress of public education under our present system, he never despaired. As a political economist he believed that it was cheaper, and as a moral economist, that it was far better to educate than to punish.

“More than forty years ago he was selected as one of the Board of Examiners of Public School Teachers and was always its chairman. When the law was enacted creating the present system of public school management he was chosen its chairman, and never missed a meeting when not prevented by sickness. Punctuality with him was one of the cardinal virtues.”

During the last few years the kindness and unfailing courtesy of his fellow members upon the County Board were a great stimulant to him to press over feeble health and other hindering causes and be present at their meetings. And when about a year before his death he wrote resigning, he received, instead of acquiescence, an earnest protest against the withdrawal, he said it was a “satisfaction to know how he was regarded by his fellow-members.”

In 1886 he was taken by his brother, Junius Mendenhall, of Minneapolis, on quite an extended trip through Florida, Cuba, Yucatan, and Mexico. The memory of their journeyings must have afforded him more pleasure than the actual experiences, as he was quite unwell most of the time. However, he never wearied of telling the strange adventures and different surroundings into which they were constantly thrown. Especially was he delighted with the visit to Izmál in Yucatan. The Mexican Railway was full of interest for him, and the City of Mexico with its Aztec relics and its historic surroundings was always an interesting subject.

The home life changed rapidly within these few years. Three of the daughters were married, the fourth at Wellesley College, and the youngest at Westtown School. So long as the mother was well all was bright, but her health began to show signs of giving way. She who had always been strong, full of life and fun, with the elasticity and gayety of her girlhood still about her, always knowing just what should be done and how to do it, quietly allowed the lines to slip from her fingers and before any of the family could realize it, least of all her husband, herself needed the care she had always bestowed upon others.

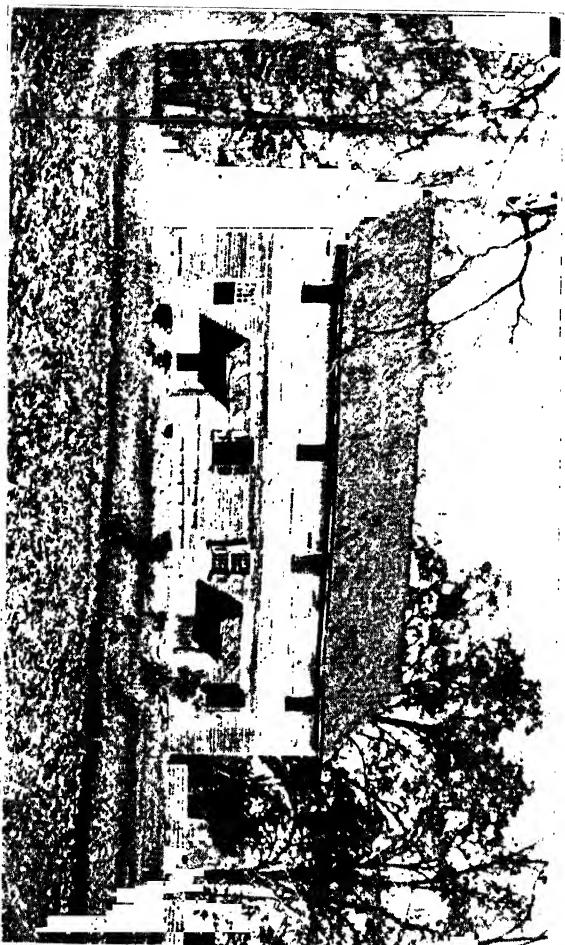
Then the light in the old home went out and it became necessary for other arrangements to be made. By this time four of the daughters were at Guilford College, the husbands of two of them and the fourth daughter herself being in the faculty, the fifth a student in the College. In order to be near them Dr. Mendenhall bought a comfortable cottage near King Hall and early in 1890 moved into it.

Its nearness to the College gave him free access to the library and also made it possible for him frequently to lecture to the students as well as attend the lectures of others given there. All this was much appreciated by both parties.

When his health permitted, his attendance upon the First-day school held in King Hall was unflinching, and his remarks during the time for review will long be remembered by both students and faculty.

On the 1st. of Eighth month, 1890, Orianna Mendenhall died suddenly. After her death he still kept his rooms at the cottage, taking his meals with his daughter who lived nearest.

His interest in the religious questions of the day was unabated. He was a Friend, not because George Fox preached, or the learned Barclay defended the doctrines of the Society, but because after studying almost all philoso-



THE NEW GARDEN MEETING-HOUSE, ADJACENT TO GUILFORD COLLEGE.

It was built in 1791 to succeed a log-house, much cut of repair at the time of the Revolutionary War, but used as a hospital after the disastrous battle of Guilford Court house. This building no longer stands, but the site is appropriately marked.

phies and all religions and constant devout study of the Bible, he came to the conclusions which the early Friends proclaimed.

His opposition to many of the theories promulgated in those days was not the antagonism of ignorance or mere tradition, but the deliberate opinion of one who had studied the matter thoroughly and knew it not only from the standpoint of a Friend, but from that of a scientist and philosopher. As evidence that this is true take a passage from his Alumni Address at Haverford :

"It seems to me that there is no real difference between the Practical Reason of Kant, the Feeling of Jacobi, and the Faith of George Fox. In the ultimate they all appeal to the voice, why may it not be said, the voice of God in the Soul. Hence, too, arises the assertion of Immortality and the Sense of Duty. Innate or connate, primitive or derived, there they are, springing up from the deepest fountains of the soul, and for all practical purposes we need carry them no farther back, and in my opinion we can carry them no farther back; for just so sure as we have a spiritual part, the Great Father of Spirits is in some sort of contact or communication with that, and is really nearer to the spirits of each one of us than we in any sense can be to each other

except as we, united among ourselves, become one with Him as Christ is one."

The following was prepared by him during the last year of life as his creed, and is given as his expression of the faith which he held:

Mea Philosophia vel Theologia, in Nunce

- I. Man is a progressive being.
- II. Though, in large degree, an animal—ruled by externals (the objective) in his actuality, or as an entelechy—he is Godlike.
- III. Man is then *potentially* Godlike.
- IV. As man's will is, so is he.
- V. Hence, as he yields to or wills the Godlike, so he becomes.
- VI. The full manifestation of God or the Godlike, to and in Humanity, was and is, by, in and through the Christ (historical and spiritual).
- VII. The Spirit guides unto all truth.
- VIII. This guiding is not completed, this day or the next, this year or the next, this century or the next, but goes on *progressively*, by and through the Spirit,

as it has guided, is now guiding and will guide the individual and the human race, this guidance pertaining to art, science, literature, matters civil, political, domestic, religious—to everything good belonging to life.

IX. Hence to WILL the WILL, or to WILL to do the WILL of the Christ, as manifested in and by the Spirit, is *progressively* to become Godlike.

As has been before mentioned his study of the Bible was unremitting. He read the Old and the New Testament in their original tongues and translated for himself. He studied Luther's translations in the German and was familiar with the commentaries and criticisms of the past and present. He read eagerly the results of the investigations of modern scholarship, and while he recognized that much of the extraneous, luring fabric which has accumulated about the truths of the Bible was being shaken and must fall, he rejoiced that the foundation of God stands sure, and often said, "The religious world is being driven to the platform upon which the early Friends took their stand. Their doctrine concerning the Scriptures is impregnable." It was with regret that he heard anyone attack the Higher

Criticism, being sure that in reality they did not understand what they were fighting.

Such statements as the following were often heard from him: "The Bible is a literature and as such it has been and will be subjected to criticism. Our canon is a selection from numerous books, many of which were rejected by the compilers. It is given not to teach history, not to teach science, but to inculcate great moral truths. Though much which has been written and believed about the Bible must sooner or later fall to the ground, its teachings can never fall because they are eternal. Criticism will not faze them, nor is it to be dreaded or avoided. The foundations of God stand sure."

The following estimate of his work and character is taken from a sketch of his life prepared by L. Lyndon Hobbs for the *Founders and Builders of Greensboro*, compiled by Betty D. Caldwell.

"As a scholar he took high rank in almost all fields of learning. In mathematics he was easily among the foremost that our State has ever produced, and always found himself at home in this department of learning anywhere his work as a teacher or civil engineer called him.

"In medical science his fine work at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia proved his

capacity. In ancient or modern languages he was equally among the best students of his time, making a life long study of the Bible, both of the Old Testament and the New, not only in English translation, but himself mastering the Hebrew for the special investigation of the Old Testament and the Greek for the New. In history he swept the entire field and he was one time introduced to President Gilman, of Johns Hopkins University, as the best read man in the Society of Friends in America. In religious philosophy he was a profound student. He embodied something of the fruit of his labors in this department of knowledge in an address to the alumni of Haverford College in 1879. For breadth of view, discriminating judgment and vigor of expression scarcely anything, in brief survey, can be found that gives a saner interpretation of some modern problems of science and religion than may be seen in this summary of human thought.

“Dr. Mendenhall felt that his best work was done in the school room as a teacher. While he knew, it always seemed, almost everything, he was modest in his claims to mastery in scholarship and always gave you the greatest possible freedom to hold your own opinion, merely wishing in every case to know your reason for your conclusion. He was eminently Socratic in his

methods both in teaching and learning. One of the finest lectures of his life, it would appear, was the one he made on Socrates based, of course, on 'Plato's Apology and Crito,' and upon the 'Memorabilia of Xenophon,' and included doubtless in its scope all that was or is known respecting the father of Greek Philosophy.

"The life of such a man was therefore very illuminating and invigorating to the young people of his day, and he valued, as Socrates valued, as every man should value, the privilege of living in the atmosphere of schools and colleges and stimulating inquiry.

"His fine spirit meant much to New Garden School in which he spent nine years of his life teaching. It also meant much, although this was coming to the end of a great life, to Guilford College, to the students of which he often lectured, and it meant much also all the way along his pilgrimage to North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends and to his native State."

For several years his health had been declining, but so gradual was the process that those nearest him were quite unaware of his condition. His interest in the welfare of the Society of Friends, and his participation in all of the efforts for human development in which Friends were engaged were as manifest as ever.

After the death of his wife in 1890, his decline became more apparent. Still he was occupied with his books, and so alert to the movements about him that even members of his family had no thought that the end of his life was near. He attended the Yearly Meeting in Eighth month, 1893, and spoke with his former earnestness on the subjects in which his interest was great. He was never able to return to his home at Guilford College, but seemed to prefer to remain in the home of his boyhood at Jamestown, where his eldest sister still lived. While consciousness remained he said frequently, "All is well, all is right"; and to the group of his children about him, "Be cheerful and believe in the goodness of God." The end came peacefully just as the sun was setting on a glorious October day.

In these pages it has been my effort to give a living rather than a memorial sketch of my father, and yet now that I have finished, it seems to me a mere shadow of his living presence.

Personality is the most illusive thing in the world. We do not know ourselves, much less our dearest friends. Into our lives there come incursions from we know not where and baffle us with their power and often alter the course which we had considered fixed. Hence while the study of a human life is fascinating and instructive, it is

at the same time a rather perilous thing to assume to explain. Many years before his death my father wrote to his dear friends Eli and Sibyl Jones as follows: "My life thus far appears to me to be a chequered page"; and then went on to enumerate the different occupations which had been his since at thirteen he left home to make a way for himself. Now after reviewing his life as far as is possible for me to do, in a sense this estimate of his in regard to a portion seems true of the whole and I can but ask myself why this outward view is in such contrast with the consistency and unity so apparent in his daily life.

Those unfamiliar with the conditions under which his work was carried on, and ignorant of the obstacles which were present because of his environment, can have little idea of the power of will and fearless character which were necessary to impress unpalatable truths upon unwilling minds which frequently became the duty of a Union man in the midst of secession groups, of an anti-slavery man surrounded by slave owners, and of a Friend in a zone inflamed with the spirit of war. He never flinched nor failed to bear witness against what he saw to be error and for what he knew to be the truth. The remarkable thing was that he never by this method

made personal enemies. If men were not convinced by his arguments they at least respected the man who dared to stand up and denounce wrong even though entrenched in high places. Knowing these things as I do, to me his life is as the dawning light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The unity which was so evident in his daily life was due to the fact that always, wherever he was and in whatever he was engaged, there were the same underlying principles which ran like a warp through every transaction, and as a consequence it was small matter whether his time was spent in study or teaching or surveying and constructing railroads, in the legislature or in general educational work.

I have attempted in this sketch to allow these principles to be apparent in his work. They were an ardent love of truth and a determination at all hazards to seek it in whatever sphere his search might lie. At that time his persistent study of the Bible and his admission that it contains discrepancies and could not be relied upon to teach either history or science were heresies unheard of. To these conclusions he came without the aid of any of the modern Biblical research, by the sheer power and integrity of his intellect. Intellectual honesty was with him a

cardinal virtue. That of which his reason was convinced was as much divine truth as any spiritual perception. In fact the whole of life was sacred and "the difference between sacred and the so-called profane history of mankind is more arbitrary than real" as he said in his lecture upon Socrates. Another of the determining factors of his life was his hunger and thirst for righteousness, which carried him safely and sanely through his period of doubt and spiritual perplexity, and resulted in giving him a character, wherever he was known, as one whose every word and act could be trusted beyond the shadow of a doubt.

His studies in comparative religions together with the conclusions arrived at through much mental suffering made him respect the sincere convictions of other men even when they differed widely from his own. He abhorred intolerance; and heresy-hunting he classed with witch-hunting. To him the odium theologicum was but a mask for ordinary human hatred, and there was nothing sacred nor commendable about it, neither in the past nor in our own day. He deplored the separations in the Society of Friends, saying they settled nothing, and while with some of the contentions of those who withdrew from North

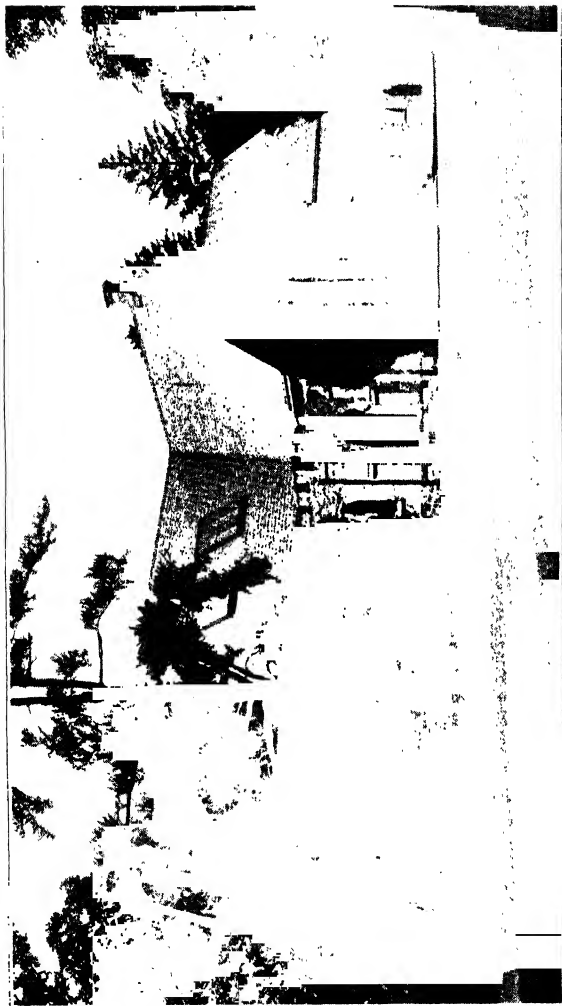
Carolina Yearly Meeting he had sympathy he said, "I will never leave the Yearly Meeting."

The manner in which he accepted the theory of organic evolution was indicative of his method of approach to any subject. Little had been disseminated on this subject previous to the Civil War and his attention had been absorbed in other matters both during and immediately succeeding that period, but when once more the magazines containing reports of the work of scientists became accessible his interest was aroused, and as soon as possible he ordered the works of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer and Tyndall. He followed their conclusions with the profoundest interest and before long was convinced of the soundness of their reasoning and thought; saying "their theories cleared up many perplexing problems." Of himself he had come to the conclusions of gradual development in regard to the accounts in the Bible.

In politics before the war he was a Whig, an admirer and ardent supporter of the great and good Governor John Motley Morehead, who was himself a strong anti-secession advocate. From his father he had imbibed the most positive anti-slavery principles. Being a Friend he was opposed to all war. Thus although the Civil War was ostensibly fought to free the slaves and he

was himself a strong Union man, he could not believe it any more righteous than other wars. At its close, when our State was overrun with the gang of Northern office-seekers, the carpet-baggers, their ring leader Albion W. Tourgee, because father was known to be a Union man and an Abolitionist, thought that he could easily win him to espouse whatever cause it was that he pretended to represent, and visited him several times with this intent; but father had not studied men so long to none effect. He saw through the wily politician and easily perceived that it was not to benefit North Carolina that Tourgee was here, but to exploit the State for his own personal gain that he had come; he would have none of him, and united himself with the only party at that time which cared in the least whether the South survived or was utterly wrecked, and fought the carpet-baggers with all of his might.

In all his varied endeavors there were just two objects which were never crowded into a subordinate place: these were the Society of Friends with North Carolina Yearly Meeting as its local representative, and the State of North Carolina, its reconstruction and development. He loved the principles of the Friends because to him they stood for the direct emancipation



ALUMNI HALL, HAVERFORD COLLEGE.

Erected in 1863-64, as a gift of the Alumni. It has recently been enlarged and now houses the large College Library.

of the human soul, and acknowledged as no other doctrine the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind. He loved his native State with an ardor which sometimes seemed almost un-Quakerly. He knew it from the mountains to the sea. He knew its vast and at that time almost untouched natural resources, its lordly forests, its rushing rivers with their tremendous water-power, its naturally fertile soil and above all he knew its people, their sturdy, virile qualities, their native ability, their general integrity, and he longed for them to become an educated as well as a law-abiding people.

No better evidence can be given of his love to the Society of Friends and his loyalty to North Carolina Yearly Meeting than his determination to stand by the school through the stormy period of the Civil War.

The following incident will show his devotion to North Carolina as proved by his action under severe tests. At the close of the war the emigration from the state was on a much larger scale than that of the pre-war exodus. Conditions were chaotic, the Government in the hands of the carpet-baggers, the Negroes at liberty to do as they chose, idleness was rife amongst them, farms run down, stock gone, everything dilapidated, no money. The prospect looked hopeless

and those who could gather together enough to take them to the West hastened to go. Whole farms were sold for less than a few acres would now bring, almost everything which he owned was what he had invested before the war in western lands. The home at Florence had been sold almost at once after leaving it. Instead of joining the Quaker migration to the west which would have been a comparatively easy undertaking, since his property was there, with what money he had, he followed the example of the prophet Jeremiah and purchased from a friend the farm he was quitting, not with any intention however of leaving the school and removing thither, but that he might have a homestead in the vicinity of Deep River Meeting, to which he had all his life belonged.

In the autumn of 1867, when his work at the New Garden School terminated, he removed his family to this home, and thereafter for almost his entire life devoted himself in one way or another to the welfare and improvement of his native State, sometimes, as formely, being engaged in the construction of railroads, but at all times using his knowledge and influence to promote the causes of education, temperance, and peace.

His cooperation with the Baltimore Association and the Freedman's Association was of

much assistance to these two lines of Christian education. Pupils trained by him during the dark days of the Civil War were almost the only North Carolinians who were employed as teachers by the Baltimore Association and his lectures to the normal schools held under its auspices were of great value and much appreciated.

When one considers the things which he did, his manner of doing them and the rich fruition which the years have brought, the belief is intensified that all goodness is one and that deeds of love and self-sacrifice, even when wrought out in isolation and suffering, are all so bound together as to make one vast harmonious whole "whose links are iron below to gold above."

